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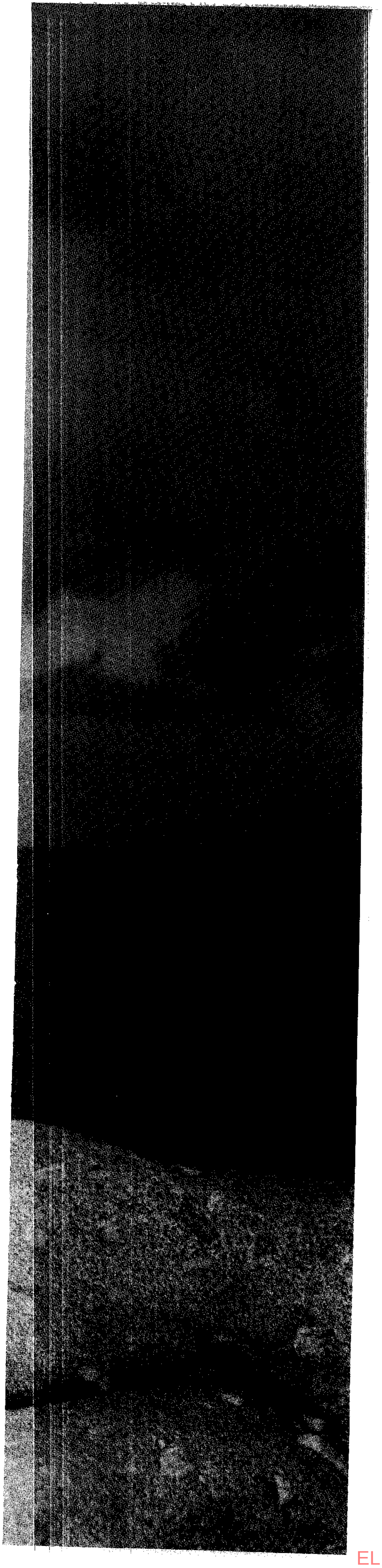

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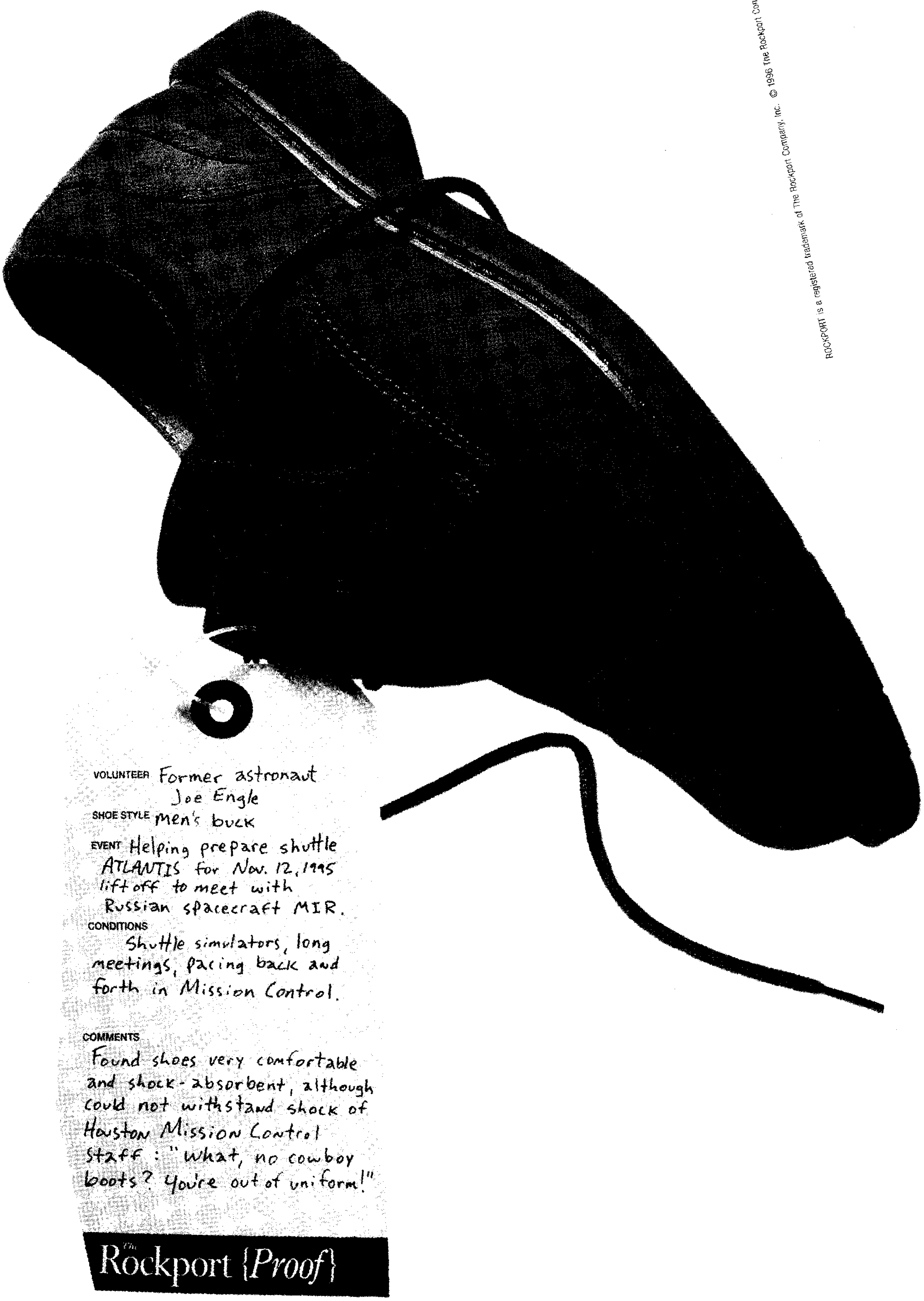

VOLUNTEER Former astronaut Joe Engle

SHOE STYLE men's buck

EVENT Helping prepare shuttle ATLANTIS for Nov. 12, 1995 lift off to meet with Russian spacecraft MIR.

CONDITIONS Shuttle simulators, long meetings, pacing back and forth in Mission Control.

COMMENTS Found shoes very comfortable and shock-absorbent, although could not withstand shock of Houston Mission Control staff: "What, no cowboy boots? You're out of uniform!"

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THE NEW YORKER

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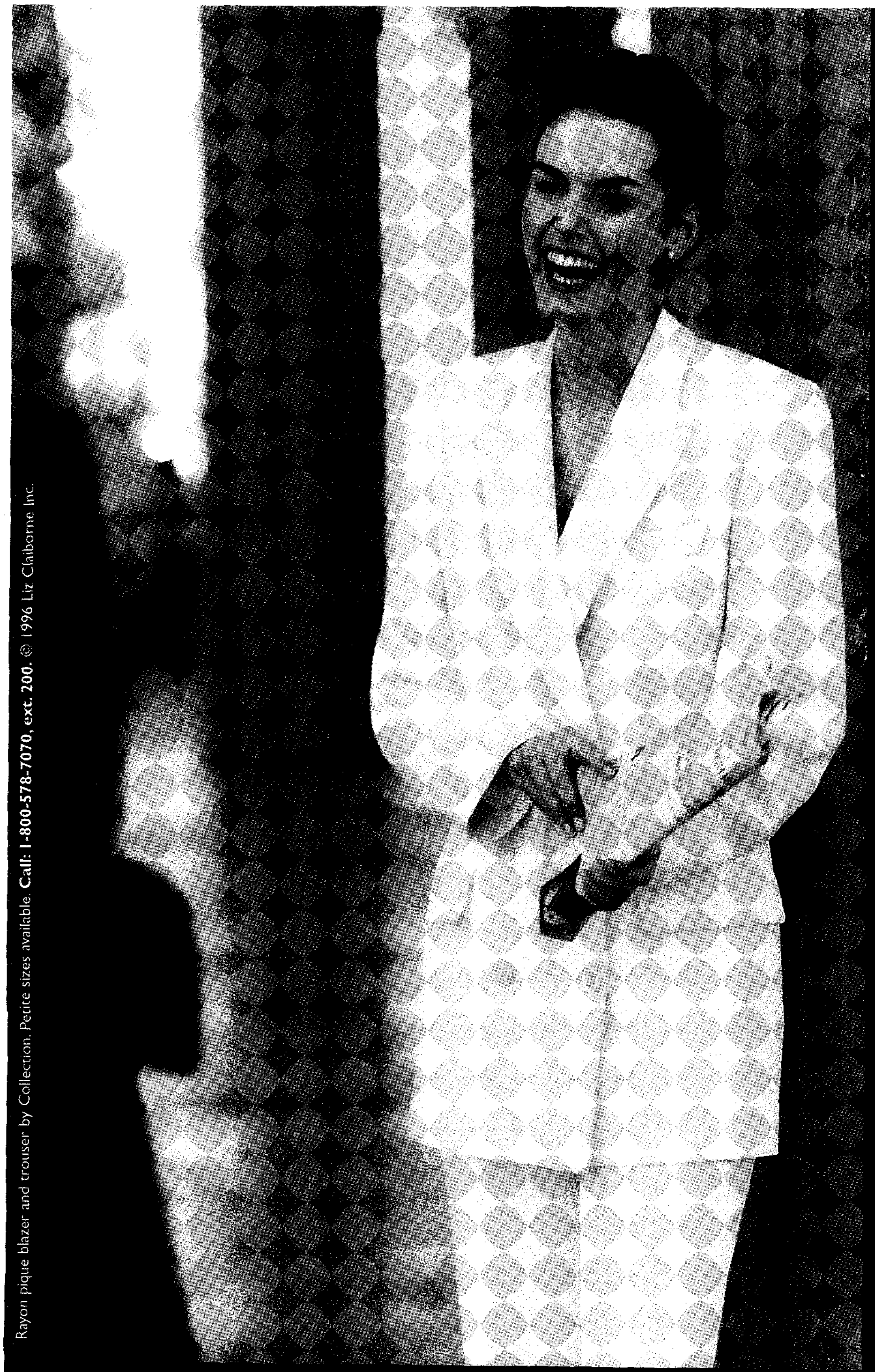

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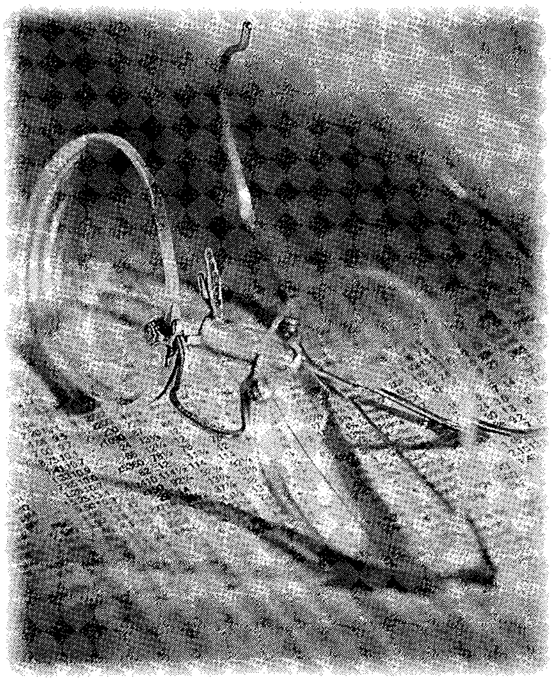

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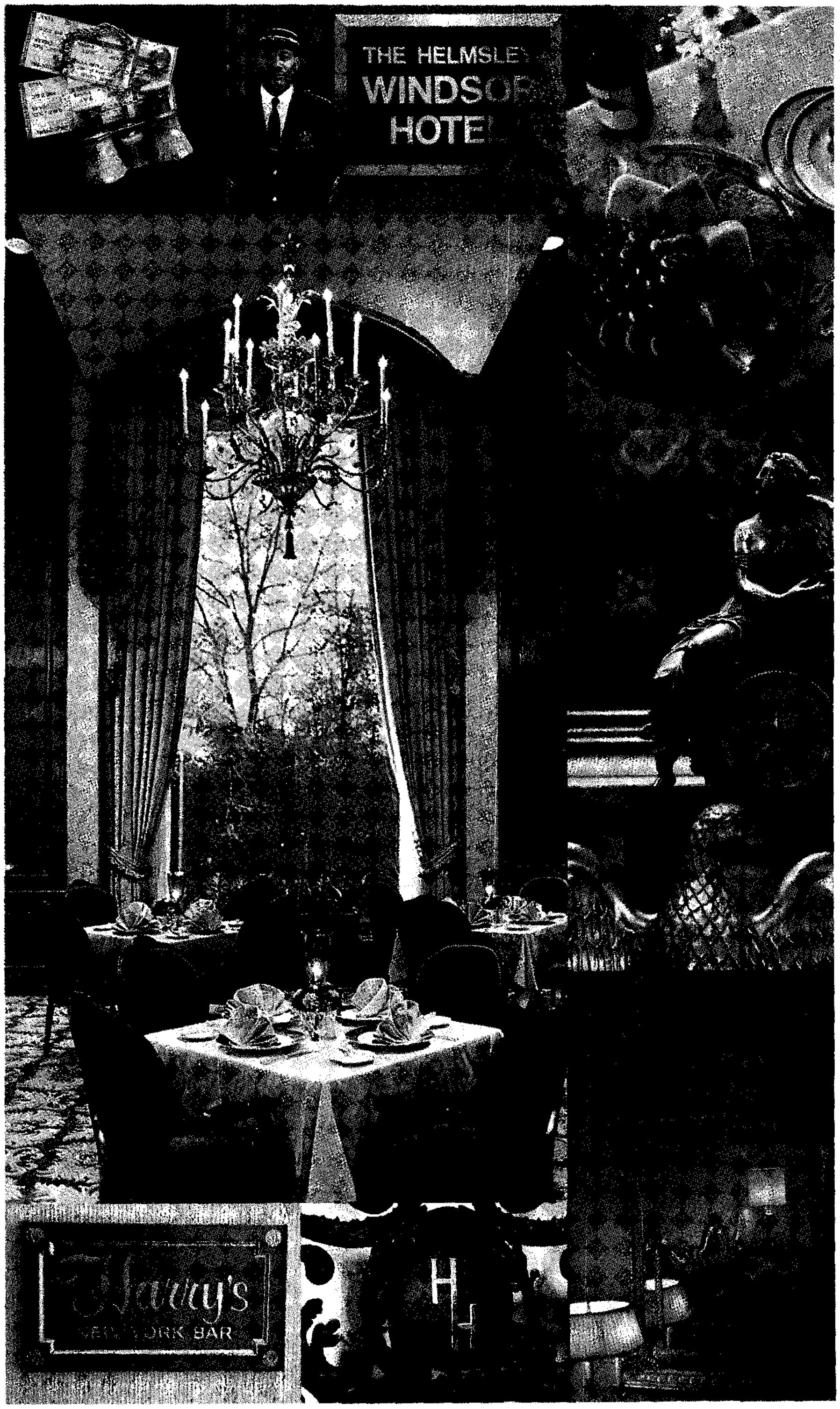

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COMMENT

DIRE STRAIT

Why is Beijing throwing such a tantrum?

THE Communist Party of China used to be very keen on "wars of national liberation," especially when they featured plucky Asian peoples struggling for self-determination against big, hegemonic bullies. No more. Wars of national subjugation are the Party's style nowadays. Beijing has been playing at such a war in recent weeks, with the aim of intimidating the government and the people of the island of Taiwan. First, Chinese forces fired ballistic missiles near busy Taiwanese ports. Then Beijing designated six thousand square miles of the Taiwan Strait an "exclusion zone," and launched a military exercise involving a hundred and fifty thousand People's Liberation Army soldiers, three hundred war planes, a naval flotilla, and immense quantities of live ammunition. The consequences were abrupt: airliners, cargo ships, and fishing vessels were forced to change course; Asian stock markets plunged; neighboring governments expressed alarm; and President Clinton dispatched two aircraft-carrier groups toward the China Sea.

Beijing's determination to deny independence to Taiwan is an anachronism at a time when the former Soviet empire has fractured into its component parts, Czechoslovakia has undergone mitosis, and Quebec votes on whether to absent itself from Canada. Although Taiwan is culturally as Chinese as Canton, it has been ruled from China proper for only four of the last hundred years (it was occupied by Japan from 1895 to 1945 and by Chiang Kai-shek's fleeing Nationalists after 1949), and it has no wish to be ruled from China proper now. The reason is obvious, and Taiwan's President, Lee Teng-hui, recently stated it succinctly: "It's not that Taiwan does not want reunification. It's just that Taiwanese people do not want to live under a Communist system."

From Beijing's point of view, Taiwan is even more irritating now than it was during its three decades as Chiang's authoritarian redoubt, because today's Taiwan is a standing rebuke to the Communists' insistence that Chinese culture is incompatible with liberal democratic institutions. (On March 23rd, the Taiwanese will vote in the first fully democratic Presidential election ever held on Chinese soil.) Even so, why does Beijing take such risks in order to frighten what it calls its "fellow Taiwan countrymen"—particularly when its foreign ministry is still coping with the fallout from rev-

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THE NET *of* DREAMS

A FAMILY'S SEARCH FOR A RIGHTFUL PLACE

JULIE SALAMON

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elations about prison enterprises exporting goods made with forced labor, officials selling human organs from freshly executed prisoners, and state-run institutions allowing unwanted orphans to die of starvation?

As Mao's austere revolution morphs into an orgy of materialism and greed, and as corruption, inflation, joblessness, and environmental degradation continue to jack up the social price of China's economic explosion, the Communist Party is running out of reasons to justify its political dictatorship. About all it has left is the fact that, with Hong Kong returning to the fold in 1997 and Macao in 1999, it is close to reuniting the country. So Party leaders have turned increasingly to nationalist pugnacity. Implicit in this arrogant new form of nationalism is the notion of a China beset by "hostile foreign forces" (read, "the United States") seeking, as in days of old, to violate its sovereignty and deny it its rightful place in the world.

If anything, however, the Clinton Administration's China policy has not been "hostile" enough. Washington has repeatedly complained about China's human-rights abuses, its provocative nuclear testing, its flouting of its agreement to allow American officials to inspect prison factories, and its refusal to shut factories churning out pirated compact disks, laser disks, and computer software. But whenever the time has come to back up those complaints with meaningful sanctions the Administration has repeatedly flinched, beginning with its abject abandonment of Mr. Clinton's original commitment to link renewal of China's Most Favored Nation trade status with an improvement in China's human-rights situation. No matter how exquisitely respectful are the tones in which American diplomats call their Chinese opposite numbers to account, China, instead of compromising, has bullied and blustered, raising the spectre of a complete breakdown in Sino-American relations. So anxious has Washington been to keep the relations "on track," so eager has it been to believe that things will somehow work out through "comprehensive engagement," that its China policy has ended up being all give and no take.

When one looks at any specific case in isolation, one usually finds it quite understandable that Washington chooses to yield rather than risk the ire not only of the Chinese but also of whatever American business interests might be damaged in the course of a dustup. But the aggregate effect of many such choices has been to teach Chinese officials that brinkmanship pays. Like a petulant child who learns that tantrums can manipulate parents, Beijing has acquired some bad habits.

The United States long ago recognized Beijing as the sole legitimate government of China and acknowledged that Taiwan is a part of China. But that recognition and that acknowledgment presupposed that the Taiwan problem would be solved peacefully. In the Taiwan Strait, the United States was finally pushed beyond its ability to yield. At the beginning of last week, the Chinese foreign minister, Qian Qichen, said darkly, "If foreign forces connive to split the motherland, there will be big chaos across the Taiwan Strait." By the end of the week, the largest American naval force in the Far East since the Vietnam War had been assembled for this strange mock confrontation, and Beijing began to back off rapidly. Still, it is unlikely that the People's Republic of China will soon choose voluntarily to become a constructive world citizen. And it is obvious that the United States can't use the Seventh Fleet to win the release of political prisoners or to gain compliance with trade agreements. But the episode holds lessons for Washington in the uses of firmness, if Washington cares to learn them.

China is still led by veteran Maoist revolutionaries, who cut their teeth on megadoses of class struggle and anti-imperialism and have remained largely isolated from the larger world. But it's worth remembering that Mao taught his old comrades-in-arms to respect real power. "Fight when you can win, move away when you can't win," the Communist sage wrote in 1936. "It is inadvisable to fight when the forces confronting us are too large." It's up to Washington to persuade Mao's heirs of the wisdom of following that advice.

—ORVILLE SCHELL

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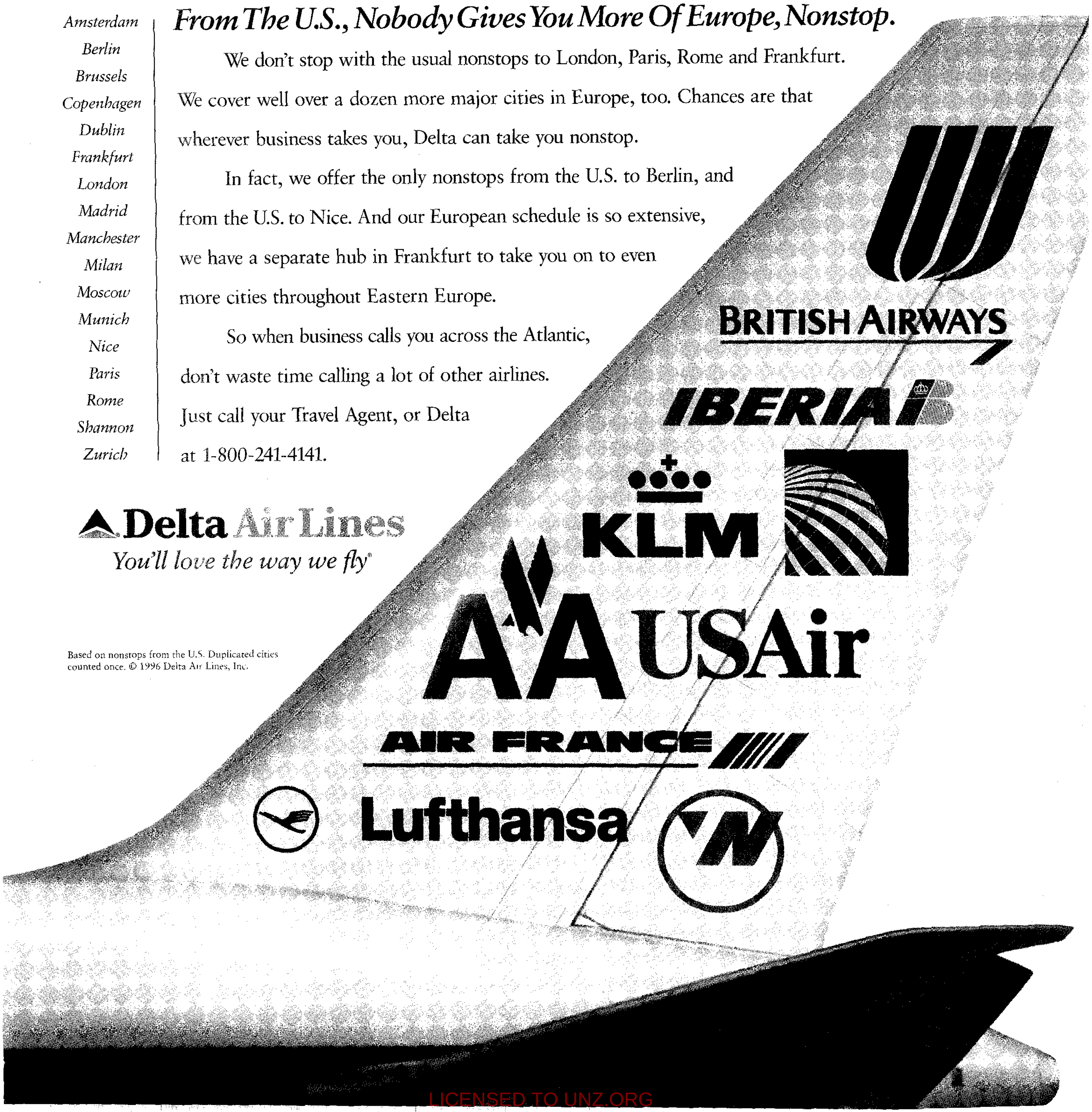

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IN THE MAIL

IN MEMORIAM

Some months ago, I flew home to hold my father for a moment before he died. Just weeks earlier, I had at last begun to see his fear and vulnerability and kindness; since his death, he has been gone from me. The late Harold Brodkey, in "This Wild Darkness" (February 5th), wrote, "I do not really understand this erasure." Nor do I. But, as Brodkey passed through the distractions, the remedies, the smug face of fame, and the "disposable wit," and descended into the "pliable water, under the sky, unmoored," he brought me a glimpse, a trace, of him I thought lost.

A. E. SUDMANN
Seattle, Wash.

I offer this as, perhaps, additional consolation to readers of David Remnick's lovely piece, "Perfect Pitch," on the loss of Joseph Brodsky (February 12th). Over lunch last November, Brodsky and I fell into a discussion about human consciousness. I was teaching a course in which I explored the notion that consciousness exists on the cellular level and therefore pervades the entire human body. He liked the idea. "Of course," he said. "After all, man is only this recent thing. We're essentially minerals and the like, *ya*? They speak us." Matter is a lyric, and Brodsky sang it through his work. So he remains with us in his poems, and in the earth.

TOM GRIMES
San Marcos, Texas

Lee Lorenz's thoughtful tribute to my friend Arthur Getz in the February 5th issue reminded me of driving through a rainy Manhattan a few days after Arthur died. I was seeing the city the way I like to think he saw it. Arthur's talent was not just an uncanny ability to capture light so realistically on canvas that you felt you were standing in it. He could also make the most mundane scenes memorable: a shopkeeper rolling out his awning for the day; the corner of a parking garage at night; cars on a rain-soaked street. It seems only fitting that Lorenz's appreciation appeared in the issue that featured J. J. Sempé's cover of a boy looking into a music-store window at dusk. Arthur would have loved the cover: the light was just right.

ANNE LONGLEY
Ridgefield, Conn.

CORRECTION

The Talk of the Town story "Exile on Centre Street" (by Susie Linfield, March 11th) inaccurately quoted me as saying that Martin Garbus's decision to represent a libel plaintiff suing the *Daily News* and its columnist Mike McAlary was comparable to "people who leave their role as prosecutor and rather quickly become counsel for drug defendants." In fact, I said there was nothing at all wrong with most lawyers representing anyone in a suit against the press or even representing the press in one case and a plaintiff against it in the next. For myself, I said the situation was different. Since I have represented so many journalists over the past three decades and feel so much of a sense of personal affiliation with them, I said that I would feel it was a betrayal for me to represent a plaintiff—for *me*, but perhaps not for Garbus. As for the comparison to prosecutors, it was your reporter who first articulated the example, and it was one that I only agreed to in terms of how I would feel about myself if I represented someone in a libel suit against a newspaper.

FLOYD ABRAMS
New York City

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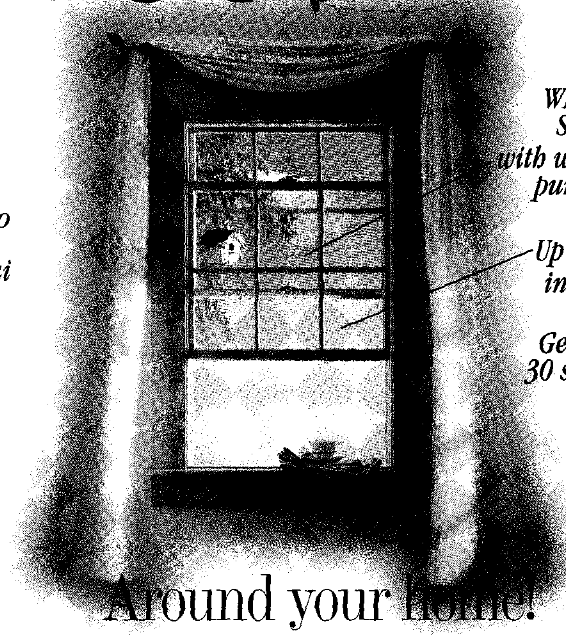

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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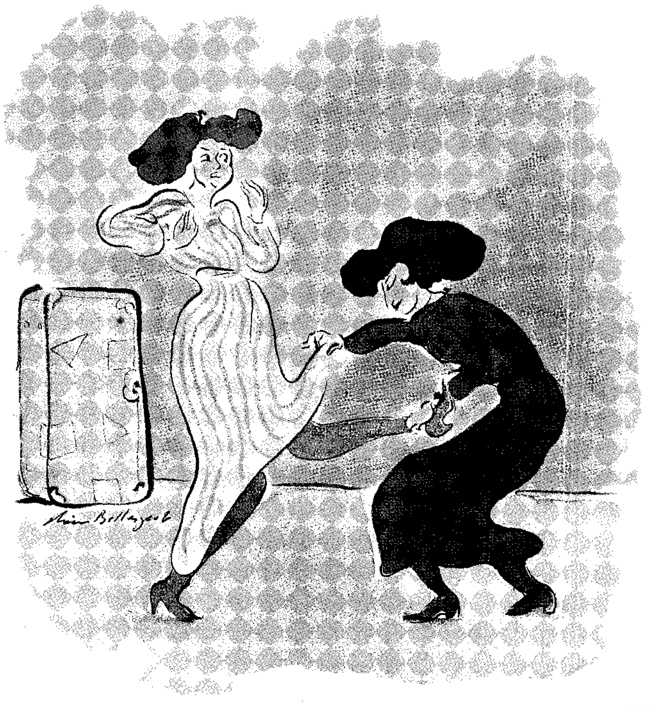
Bomber Jackets—A brief relationship between a gang member and a transvestite results in violence, in a new drama by Rob Santana, presented by the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. Performances are in English Wednesdays through Fridays and in Spanish on Saturdays and Sundays. Preview on March 20. Opens March 21 at 8 and runs through April 21. (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

A Catalogue of City Life—Japanese comedian Issey Ogata portrays an array of angst-ridden urbanites in his solo show. Performances are in Japanese with simultaneous English translation. March 26-28 at 8. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015.)

Cowgirls—Country and classical collide in a new musical comedy, in which a country-music hall mistakenly books a chamber trio for its grand reopening. By Mary Murfitt and Betsy Howie. In previews. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Presenting an evening of one-acts by David Mamet: "A Sermon," "Almost Done," "Sunday Afternoon," "Joseph Dintenfass," and "No One Will Be Immune." Preview on March 20. Opens March 21 at 8 and continues through April 7. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405.)



Christa Kirby and Everett Quinton, in "Call Me Sarah Bernhardt."

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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—A revival of the 1962 Stephen Sondheim–Burt Shevelove–Larry Gelbart musical, starring Nathan Lane as the Roman slave Pseudolus. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with choreography by Rob Marshall. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

I Do! I Do!—Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt's 1964 musical comedy about marriage, starring Karen Ziemba and David Garrison as the durable dyad. In previews. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The King and I—Lou Diamond Phillips is the mulish monarch of Siam and Donna Murphy his children's English governess in a revival of the 1950 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Christopher Renshaw is the director. In previews. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Life Is a Dream—Spanish playwright Calderón de la Barca's 1635 drama, about a prince imprisoned since birth by his father, in a Pearl Theatre Company production. Previews begin March 22. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Love Thy Neighbor—Jackie Mason returns to Broadway, with the Boys Choir of Harlem, in a new one-man show (of sorts). In previews through March 23. Opens March 24 at 6:30. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Royal Shakespeare Company brings the Bard's comedy to town for a ten-week engagement. Directed by Adrian Noble. Previews begin March 20. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St., 307-4100.)

The Night of the Iguana—Cherry Jones, Marsha Mason, and William Petersen star in the Roundabout Theatre's revival of Tennessee Williams's 1961 play. Directed by Robert Falls. Two previews on March 20. Opens March 21 at 8. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Seven Guitars—August Wilson's new play, set in Pittsburgh in 1948, examines the final days in the life of a blues guitarist (Keith David). Lloyd Richards is the director. In previews. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Shattering—A drama about a family whose naïve support of a third-party presidential candidate brings about its collapse. Written by Mark Shapiro. In previews. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

The Size of the World—An eccentric New Jersey family alters a young man's notion of the American Dream, in a new comedy starring Rita Moreno, Frank Whaley, and Louis Zorich. Written by Charles Evered. Opens March 20 at 8 and runs through April 7. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

State Fair—John Davidson, Kathryn Crosby, Andrea McArdle, and Donna McKechnie star in a theatrical version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein movie musical. Directed by James Hammerstein and Randy Skinner. Previews begin March 20. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Victor or Children Take Over—The Arden Party Theatre Company presents French surrealist Roger Vitrac's satire of nineteen-twenties bourgeois society. Directed by Karin Coonrod. In previews. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 969-0551.)

Zombie Prom—A new nineteen-fifties rock-and-roll musical. With book and lyrics by John Dempsey and music by Dana P. Rowe. Previews begin March 22. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Andrea Martin and Marga Gomez—Two solo shows—"Nude, Nude, Totally Nude," Martin's new multicharacter comedy, and "A Line Around the Block," Gomez's tribute to her father, the Cuban entertainer Willy Chevalier—are in repertory at the Public. (425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Bein' with Behan—In his garrulous, formulaic portrayal of the late poet, playwright, and political activist Brendan Behan, the talented and hardworking Irish actor Michael L. Kavanagh pauses only long enough to take the occasional gargle of Guinness. But the audience doesn't have the solace of a pint during this two-hour pub monologue, and while Kavanagh clearly knows the terrain and characters whereof he speaks, a lad might do better to take his Behan straight—it's bound to pack a harder wallop than this watered-down brew. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 279-4200.)

Below the Belt—Richard Dresser's brilliant dark comedy is set in "an industrial compound in a distant land," but it hits close to home in its dead-on absurdist take on modern life. Judd Hirsch, Robert Sean Leonard, and Jude Ciccolella are three men who work for a company that makes "units." (Units of what, you ask? Don't ask.) Dresser's dialogue sharply and resonantly limns their paranoia. One wishes for slightly sharper performances from the actors, but the production, under the direction of Gloria Muzio, is nevertheless very satisfying, especially the vividly drab set and costumes. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Blue Window—Under Joe Mantello's beautiful direction, Craig Lucas's well-written but slim 1984 play—about a party given by a nervous hostess and attended by six other young New Yorkers—seems almost substantial. David Aaron Baker and Allison Janney stand out in an excellent cast. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 24.)

Brine County Wedding—Christopher V. Alessi is convincing as all six characters in his comic tale

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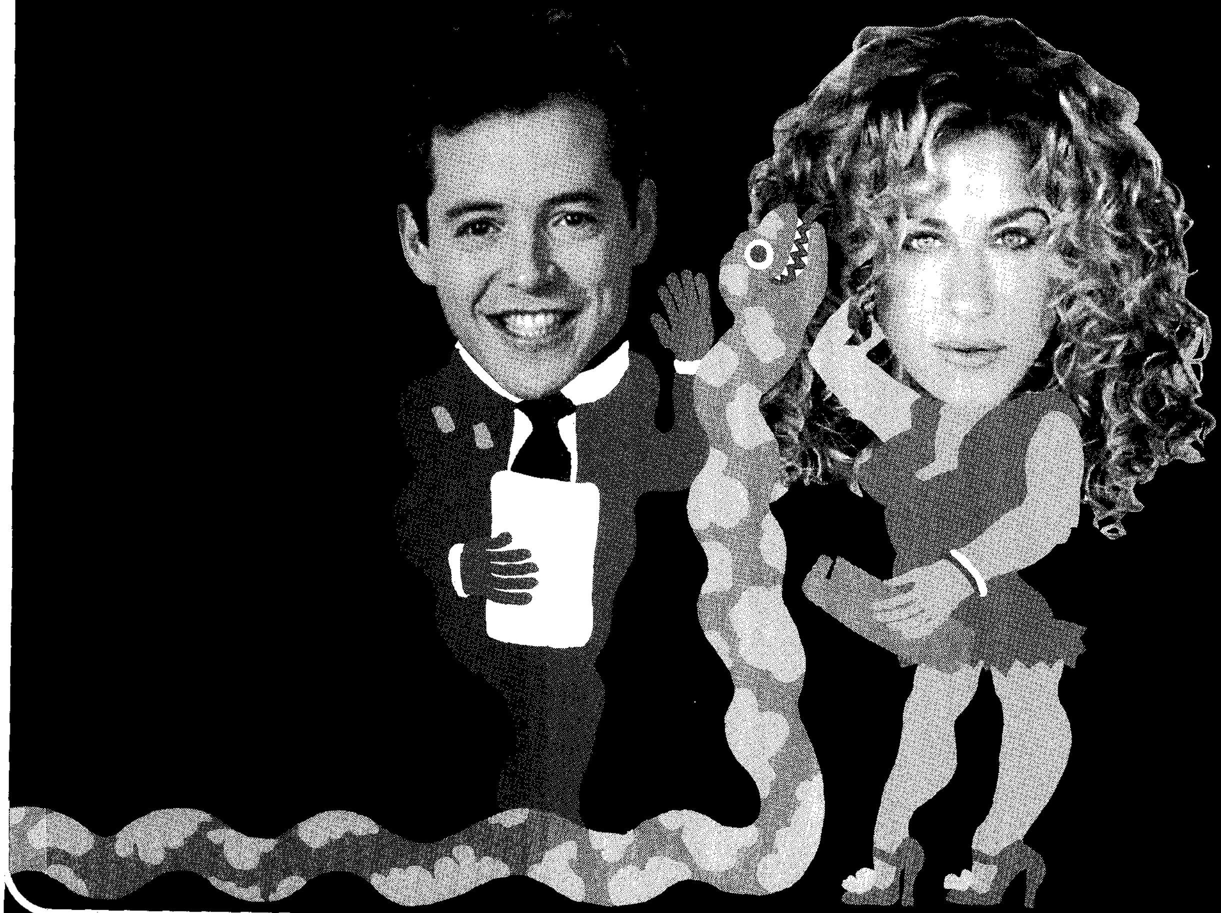

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of the events leading up to a wedding in a small Alabama town, but the play takes some wrong turns into drama, and in the end neither the writing nor the acting is strong enough to save the show from confusion. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes March 31.)

Call Me Sarah Bernhardt—The latest from Everett Quinton and the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

Entertaining Mr. Sloane—The Classic Stage Company's vivid revival of Joe Orton's 1964 black farce is delicious in every way: the set and the costumes are spot on, and the entire cast turns in terrific performances—especially Ellen Parker and Brian Murray, as the sister and brother whose lascivious actions toward their overripe young boarder, Mr. Sloane (Neil Maffin), speak much louder than their virtuous words. Also with George Hall. David Esbjornson directed. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes March 24.)

A Fair Country—In John Robin Baitz's new play, the personal and the political are inextricably bound up in the plight of the family of an American diplomat in South Africa and The Hague. Laurence Luckinbill, as the well-meaning liberal Harry Burgess (that surname, with its echo of betrayal, is no accident), sets in motion an unseen but horrifying course of events when he takes steps to keep his family from disintegrating. Thematically, the play, directed by Daniel Sullivan, is a very neat package, but emotionally it rings hollow, and it isn't helped by uneven performances from Judith Ivey, Matt McGrath, and Dan Futterman. The set, however, marks yet another triumph for the ever resourceful Tony Walton. (3/11/96) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Floyd Collins—A compelling new American musical, in the naturalistic style of a ballad folk opera, that takes off from the true story of Floyd Collins, a spelunker whose sixteen-day entrapment in a Kentucky cave in 1925 sparked a massive rescue operation and one of the country's first media circuses. Adam Guettel has supplied haunting melodies and poetically down-to-earth lyrics; Tina Landau wrote the book and also did the lucid staging. As Floyd, Christopher Innvar has a face like hewn rock; the rest of the cast harmonizes beautifully with the eight-piece countrified orchestra. The wooden-plank set, backlit tableaux, and period-perfect costumes evoke a photojournalistic dream turned nightmare. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 24.)

Forbidden Hollywood—Gerard Alessandrini, originator of the delightful, long-running "Forbidden Broadway" series, returns with a sendup of the movie biz. The show's revue format is by nature hit or miss, and the many hits include a Jimmy Stewart–Kate Hepburn duet called "I'm Glad I Don't Act Anymore" and a sloshed Pat and Dick Nixon going on about Oliver Stone. The most conspicuous miss is an impersonation of Demi Moore, whose imperviousness to caricature says much about the nature of her stardom. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Getting Away With Murder—John Rubinstein, Terrence Mann, and Christine Ebersole star in Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's new comic thriller. And it's not a musical. Directed by Jack O'Brien. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Green Bird—The recently restored New Victory Theatre is a beautiful setting for Julie Taymor's spectacular, charming, and smug production of Carlo Gozzi's 1765 anti-philosophical fable. Christine Jones's set, Constance Hoffman's costumes, and Ms. Taymor's signature masks and puppets are stunning and witty (flying, singing apples may be the highlight), but Albert Bermel's updated translation is too full of modernisms (when Pat Buchanan jokes appear in eighteenth-century Venetian fables, there really is no escape), and the pace is too slow to carry off the ridiculous plot twists of commedia dell'arte, which requires speed to be funny, however good the cast. The New Victory is a family theatre, though, and many kids will delight in this show. For adults and children ages twelve and up. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes March 24.)

Inherit the Wind—George C. Scott and Charles Durning go head to head in a National Actors Theatre revival of the 1955 drama about the Scopes "monkey trial." Directed by John Tillinger. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

La Mama—March 21-23 at 10: "Jail Babes," starring the transvestite Tallulahs known as the Duelling Bankheads (David Ilku and Clark Render). ¶ March 21-23 at 8 and March 24 at 3:30 and 8: "Interfacing Joan," written and performed by Louise Smith, as St. Joan; directed by Ping Chong. Through March 24. . . . ¶ March 21-24 at 7: "The House of Nancy Dunn," a musical comedy about an Upper East Side serial killer, by Steve Weisberg, Andy Craft, and Howard Pflanzer. (74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

Master Class—Zoe Caldwell portrays Maria Callas with steely, diva-esque conviction in Terrence McNally's latest play, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Mr. Budhoo's Letter of Resignation from the I.M.F.—Peter Schumann and his Bread and Puppet Theatre offer a new rendition of their political play. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes March 30.)

Mrs. Klein—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory in Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Molly Sweeney—Brian Friel's 1994 play owes much to an Oliver Sacks case study, but Friel didn't reimagine the material, and the play, which he directed, comes across as a staged reading of an essay. (1/29/96) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Moon Over Buffalo—Carol Burnett and Philip Bosco are on a brief hiatus from Ken Ludwig's farce. Lynn Redgrave and Robert Goulet take over until they return, on April 23. Tom Moore directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Nixon's Nixon—On the eve of his resignation, the thirty-seventh president and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, uncork the brandy decanter and spill a few secrets about power as they have known it. The script, by Russell Lees, has its share of dead spots, but the performers—Gerry Bamman as Nixon and Steve Mellor as Kissinger—are always engaging and sometimes masterful. Directed by Jim Simpson. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 315-2244.)

Overtime—A. R. Gurney's latest, a modern "sequel" to "The Merchant of Venice," asks the Rodney King question, "Can we all get along?" This time around, Portia is an echt-Wasp party giver (wonderfully played by Joan McMurtrey), Salerio an uptight accountant in a Brooks Brothers suit (the excellent Robert Stanton), Shylock (Nicholas Kepros) a sweet old mensch, and so on. You get the picture. Gurney takes aim at every imaginable stereotype, and about half the time he hits his target. Nicholas Martin directed. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Set in a Paris bar in 1904, Steve Martin's comedy features Einstein and Picasso sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world. It contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Rent—Inspired by Puccini's "La Bohème," the late Jonathan Larson's rock opera, set in a gray and dishevelled East Village loft space, stands every assumption of the traditional musical on its head. No such work could support so much narrative overload (eight separate stories are told), yet by the end of the evening, Larson's talent has taken the audience to places where the musical never ventures these days. (2/19/96) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475. The play closes here on March 31. It moves to Broadway's Nederlander Theatre on April 16.)

Sabina—A new drama by Willy Holtzman, based on Aldo Carotenuto's book "A Secret Symmetry," about the relationships between Freud, Jung, and Jung's associate and lover Sabina Spielrein. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes April 7.)

Sleep Deprivation Chamber—The son of an African-American playwright is brutalized by a policeman, who then charges the young man with assault and battery. The Signature Theatre Company's playwright-in-residence, Adrienne Kennedy, and her son Adam based this joint effort on an actual event. The villains are, understandably, thickheaded and one-dimensional, and you can forgive the mother for sounding put-upon from start to finish. But why on earth did the writers put a dream sequence in the middle of the climactic trial, with the son popping out of an upstage grave and shaking Yorick's skull? (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes March 24.)

Spoke Man—A one-man show by John Hockenberry, about his adventures reporting the news—for National Public Radio and for television—from a wheelchair. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes March 24.)

The Sun Dialogues—The Adobe Theatre Company presents a dark comedy by David Hollander, about an obsessed Hollywood script reader. (46 Walker St. 560-7387. Closes April 6.)

Tartuffe—Jean Cocteau Repertory presents Richard Wilbur's translation of Molière's 1664 comedy, which will run in rotating repertory with Shaw's "Major Barbara." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

The Universe—Richard Foreman and the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre's latest mind-wrenching vaudeville. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes March 31.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic, and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is patchwork. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo, at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Virgins and Other Myths—Colin Martin's one-man show—a sort of "This Gay Boy's Life"—is an explicit though graceful dive into the depths of his own psyche. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes March 31.)

A Whistle in the Dark—David Leary is electric as the patriarch of a clan of Irish brawlers in early-sixties England. Frightened by his own failure, this man has taught his sons that the only way to live is to fight—everywhere, all the time—a philosophy that leads to tragedy when one son questions it. Thomas Murphy's 1961 play begins slowly, but the act-

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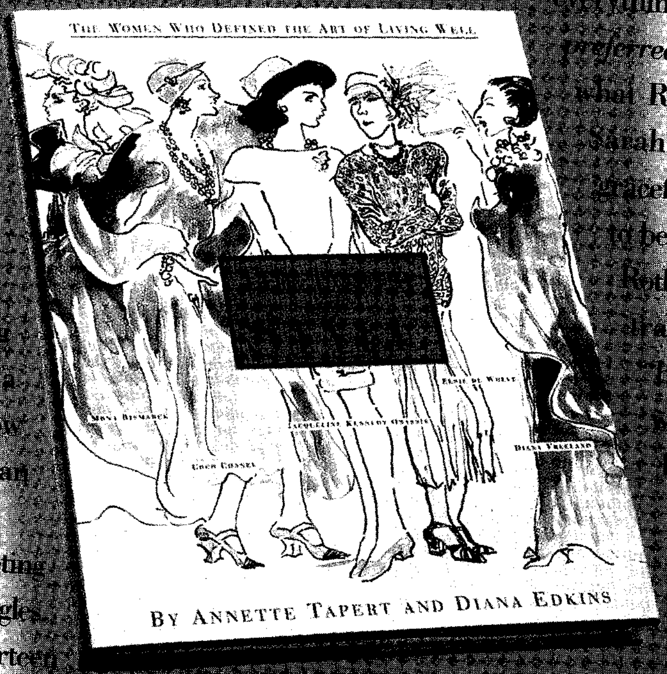
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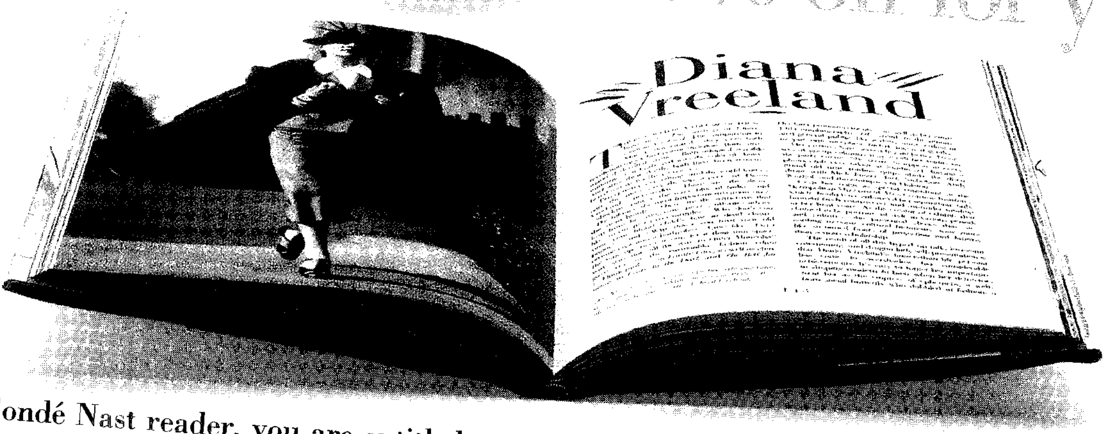
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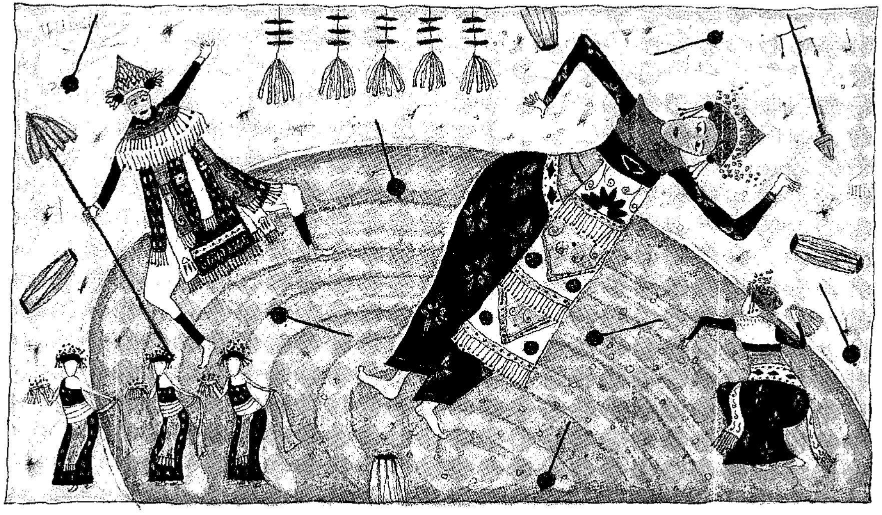
ing is solid throughout, and Mr. Leary is a charismatic center of attention long before his character's malignity becomes clear. Directed by Charlotte Moore. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes March 31.)

Working Title—A screenwriter tries to hold his crumbling career and marriage together, in a new comedy by Andrew Bergman. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **THE FOOD CHAIN:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. (Closes March 24.) . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.



The Dancers and Musicians of Bali, at Town Hall.

YUMI HEO

DANCE

Feld Ballets/NY—March 20 and March 26 at 8: "Ah Scarlatti," "Ion," "Ogive," and "Paper Tiger." . . . ¶ March 21 at 8: "Consort," "Chi," "Charmed Lives," and "Paean." . . . ¶ March 22 at 8: "Harbinger," "Kore," "With Dew Upon Their Feet," and "Ludwig Gambits." . . . ¶ March 23 at 2 and March 24 at noon: "Kids Dance," featuring repertory works performed by dancers chosen from local schools. . . . ¶ March 23 at 8: "The Grand Canon," "Santa Fe Saga," "Asia," and "Doo Dah Day." . . . ¶ March 24 at 4: "La Vida," "Clave," "Gnossiennes," and "The Jig Is Up." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 31.)

The Dancers and Musicians of Bali—Men (darting, in plié) and women (angular, their hands curling in mudra-like gestures) from the South Bali village of Peliatan perform trance dances, war dances, masked dances, and love duets, while the gamelan plays onstage. The thirty-five-member company, under the direction of Anuk Agung Gede Oka Kaleran, makes its first visit since 1989. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 21 (a benefit) and March 22 at 8.)

"My House Was Collapsing Toward One Side"—Dancer and performance artist Dawn Akemi Saito and director Charles L. Mee, Jr., collaborate on a full-length work combining Saito's *butoh* dance with texts by a tenth-century courtesan and testimonials from Hiroshima survivors recalling the instant the atom bomb exploded. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 21-23 at 8 and March 24 at 3. Through April 7.)

Sensedance—German choreographer Henning Rübsam offers two premières, "Dolphins and Antelopes," based on the animals' saltatory movements, and "Jephte," inspired by the Old Testament warrior and set to Carissimi's oratorio, performed by the Florilegium Chamber Choir. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 21-24 at 8:30.)

Ton Simons and Dancers—Ty Boomershine, Keith Chamberlain, and Brenda Daniels dance in four works by Dutch choreographer Ton Simons. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 586-5885. March 21-22 at 9 and March 23-24 at 8.)

"Nervous"—When asked by choreographer Lynn Parkerson if she might use his poem "Nervous Forces" as a text for a piece, Jeffrey Gustavson thought, How in the world could someone make a dance out of this? He needn't have been so skeptical. His poem is danceable, rhythmic, even kinetic, and he reads it with dramatic vigor as the six dancers perform. Feeling "envious of the dancers," the poet has added movement to his own role in the piece, rising from the chair in which he is hunkered down for some full-body gesticulations. The result of the collaboration, "Nervous," appears on a program with three other Parkerson works and a short film. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. March 21-23 at 8 and March 24 at 3. For information about tickets, call 876-4961.)

Compañia Wanichigu—The twenty-five dancers, drummers, and vocalists of the Central American troupe perform four works ("El Punta," "El Chumba," "Danza Paranda," and "Jamcunu") to the Afro-Caribbean rhythms of the Garifuna culture of the Gulf Coast. (Bronx Museum, 1040 Grand Concourse, the Bronx. 1-718 681-6000. March 24 at 3.)

Dance Works in Progress—Douglas Dunn leads a discussion of three works, by Mark DeGarmo (trios, including one for three men and a parachute), Scott Heron (a work choreographed by Deborah Hay which Heron is learning through the mail), and Cynthia Oliver ("Bed Op.Us: Window Dance," about a woman's relationship to her bed). (184 Eldridge St., at Delancey St. March 24 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the performance.)

NIGHT LIFE

Tracy Chapman—It's been seven years since "Fast Car" turned this earnest folksinger into an overnight sensation; that damn car must be the bane of her existence. Nevertheless, she continues to make records: "New Beginning" is her latest. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 20 at 8.)

Karen Akers—The statuesque Ms. Akers brings her elegant French show, "Under Paris Skies," to Lincoln Center. Is she French? American? Swiss, perhaps? It's all part of her mystique—which is formidable (and certainly necessary if you're going to sing almost an entire show here in a foreign language). But rest assured she will be beautiful, poised, and gracious, and she'll sing with exquisite if not entirely authentic Gallic angst. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 20 at 8.)

Laura Branigan / Shannon / Peaches & Herb / Kool & the Gang—A mixed bag. Branigan bellowed her way to the top in 1982 with "Gloria," produced one decent follow-up, "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You? (written and subsequently butchered by Michael Bolton), then faded into obscurity. Shannon scored two smashes in 1984: "Give Me Tonight" and "Let the Music Play." (It did; she didn't.) Peaches & Herb first disbanded in the sixties, when Francine (Peaches) Barker got married and Herb Fame became a policeman in Washington, D.C. In 1975, Fame returned with his new Peaches, Linda Green, and two great ballads: "Reunited" and "I Pledge My Love." Led by bassist Robert (Kool) Bell, Kool & the Gang began its career in the mid-sixties as the Jazziacs; the group became a brand name with the addition of ultra-smooth lead vocalist James (JT) Taylor and mega-hits like "Ladies' Night," "Joanna," "Get Down on It," and the inescapable "Celebration." Taylor left the band for a solo career in 1988, and the hits dried up. But for this occasion, the boys have—to borrow a Peaches & Herbism—reunited. A good thing; in its heyday, Kool & the Gang was one of the best live acts around. With Latina disco diva Lisa-Lisa. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. March 21 at 8.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—With Ann Hampton Callaway. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 21 at 8.)

"Wall to Wall Folk"—Twelve hours of music from Odetta, Tom Paxton, Tom Chapin, and more. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. No tickets required. March 23, from 11 A.M. to 11 P.M.)

Cleo Laine and John Dankworth—An evening of cabaret. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 23 at 7:30 and 10.)

"The Golden Pen"—Arrangers—the often unheralded auteurs behind the classic big bands of the thirties—were the backbone of swing. This evening Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra pay homage to backroom scribes like Sy Oliver, Eddie Durham, and the legendary Fletcher Henderson, the writer most responsible for the signature sound of Benny Goodman's epoch-defining ensemble. Marsalis will conduct. (Alice Tully Hall. March 23 at 8.)

Joan Baez / Dar Williams—While this sixties diva continues to (in the words of the old protest song) "carry it on" with humanitarian organizations like Amnesty International, she's become more a symbol than an actual musical presence. Last year's comeback album, "Ring Them Bells," recorded live at the Bottom Line with a little help from Janis Ian, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and the Indigo Girls, didn't make much of a dent in the charts, but her clarion soprano still brings anyone within earshot to attention. The clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter Williams is another stunner from a growing list of smart, gifted women who are redefining folk music in the nineties. She's followed up last year's fine début, "The Honesty Room," with the just-released—and just as fine—"Mortal City." (Beacon Theatre. March 23 at 8.)

"Hooray for Spinach: The Songs of Harry Warren"—With the Manhattan Rhythm Kings, Leon Redbone, Vince Giordano & the Nighthawks, and pianist Peter Mintun. (Alice Tully Hall. March 24 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**JULIE WILSON** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 24: a double bill with the **ZAWINUL SYNDICATE** and the **MIKE STERN** trio. Joe Zawinul is best remembered as the overlord of Weather Report, but these days, synthesizer-driven techno-jazz is a bit out of step. Still, writing off the composer of "In a Silent Way" and "Birdland" would be risky. Like most contemporary jazz guitarists, Stern has a bad case of run-on fingers, but his silken tone and bebop flair keep things listenable. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 24: **BETTY BUCKLEY**, Broadway's current incarnation of the deluded and agoraphobic ex-movie queen Norma Desmond, leaves the cavernous stage of "Sunset Boulevard" and journeys some forty blocks south for a night at this Village landmark. Can she make the transition? Of course she can. She's an actress, isn't she? And she certainly has the big, unabashed voice and even bigger emotions that come with the territory. Will it work at the Bottom Line? "I'm big," she might say. "It's the audience that's small." Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through March 23: the **PHILIP HARPER** trio. Before it was commonplace for hot-shot young trumpeters to arrive with every other Greyhound bus, Harper was out there blowing. Since the breakup of the popular Harper Brothers band, he's been going it alone, with considerable sagacity and poise. **HAROLD MABERN** and **GEOFF KEEZER** take over on March 25. These two pianists both love the funky poetry of the blues: Mabern (a fixture in George Coleman's band for thirty years) is a piston of energy and ideas—he got his grit straight from Memphis. Keezer made a name for himself in the jazz explosion of the late eighties—he's listened hard to all the right records. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BARBARA COOK** is in command of this urbane dinner-and-music room through late April. Her voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue, and her material is as winning as a fresh corsage. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Through March 23: the **JIMMY MC GRIFF AND HANK CRAWFORD** quartet. The R. & B.-coated jazz of the Hammond-organ-and-saxophone combo is a time-honored, intrinsically American dialect; few artists speak it as well as McGriff and Crawford. McGriff coaxes sweet-tempered blues out of his keyboard while Crawford's alto exalts and cusses with funky aplomb. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—**PAT MARTINO** (through March 24) has won the admiration of three generations of jazz fretmen (and Jerry Garcia). He knows how to transform experience, technique, and ideas into genuine music—a concept lost on most guitar manglers. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. March 20-23: Piano and bass with Pierre Hurel and John Robinson.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—The **PHAROAH**

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SANDERS group begins a six-night run on March 26. With his titanic eruptions now tempered by an equal flair for soulful ballads, Sanders has become the complete saxophonist. It's been quite an evolution. Once a roaring iconoclast—he used to make even late-period Coltrane sound reserved—he now embraces the audience with his colossal tone and naked emotion. A week of Sanders can cure what ails you.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Vocalist **LINDA LAVIN** is the current star-in-residence.... ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

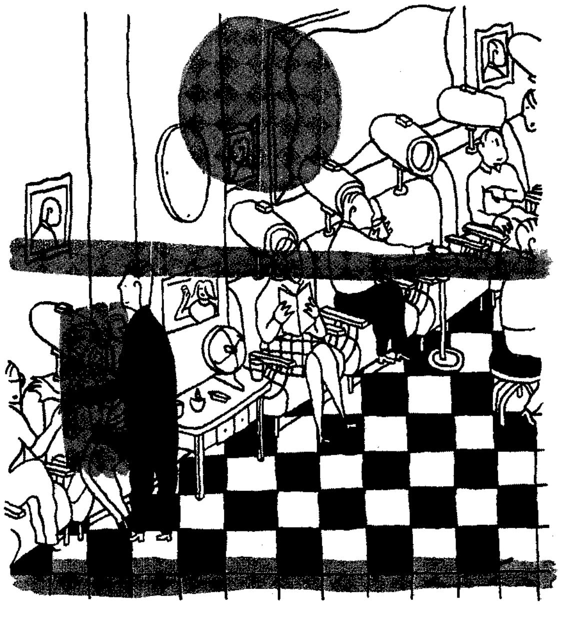
SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through March 24: **RAY ANDERSON'S ALLIGATORY BAND.** This large combo gives trombonist Anderson an excuse to put his avant-isms on the back burner and indulge in some serious funk. Whatever the context, his nothing-is-sacred grasp is always impressive, and his froggy vocalizing is a riot. Starting March 26: the **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM** trio. It's always a treat to hear this pianist: his free-ranging improvisations, Ellingtonian lyricism, and funky Johannesburg vamps capture the common ground between South Africa and the Big Apple. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **JOE LOVANO** quartet is currently in the midst of a two-week run. It's official: Lovano has arrived. Jazz critics, seduced by his rigorous skills and visionary intelligence, have been joined by jazz fans hungry to hear an experienced artist with his own sound and ideas. This time, Lovano gets the star treatment. For the first week, he'll be bringing in a classic rhythm section: pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Christian McBride, and drummer Lewis Nash; the second week, he'll be joined by his soul mate and collaborator, the trumpeter Tom Harrell. Come early and expect a tight fit. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—March 20-23: James Williams. March 26: The Ben Wolfe quartet.

ZINC BAR, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Through March 21: the **GARRISON FEWELL** trio. A new face in town, with the goods to make a real showing, this guitarist is an assured stylist with a strong sense of tradition. The **HAROLD ALDEN** trio swings by on March 26. Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through March 23: piano and drums with **PETE MALINVERNI** and **LEROY WILLIAMS.** Malinverni, along with pianists like Michael Weiss and Mike LeDonne, belongs to a New York substratum of reliable and utterly indispensable performers who play their bop with a touch of grassroots swing. Williams's fiery technique is tempered by his excellent taste. Dining.



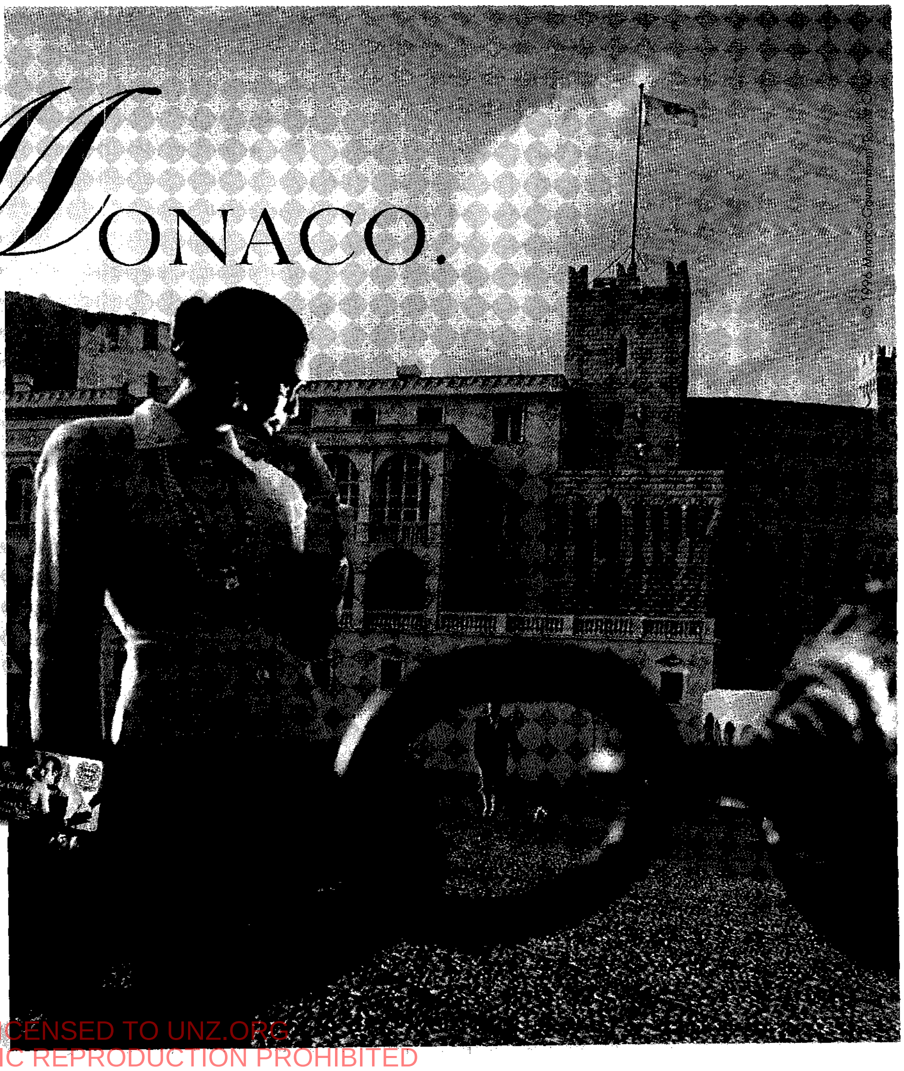
Cocktails and coifs: an evening at the Beauty Bar.

LAURENT CIUFFO

ROCK, ETC.

BEAUTY BAR, 231 E. 14th St (539-1389)—An impressive collection of lounge and rockabilly records (and close proximity to the L train) have made this former beauty salon (with antique helmet hair dryers, arcane shaving equipment, dye-job price charts) a beachhead for the unkempt but glamorous Williamsburg crowd. Like many a good watering hole, the joint has become a bit overexposed, but in the wee hours the drinking is good and the barber-chair acrobatics are daring.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 23: **RICK DANKO** and **ERIC ANDERSEN.** This intermittent, open-ended collaboration joins The Band's fidgety-voiced bassist and a singer-songwriter who, long before Springsteen, Costello, and Forbert, was saddled with the "next Dylan" tag.



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Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—March 22: **JOHNNY SKILSAW.** March 24: **TRANS AM.** With **SIX FINGER SATELLITE.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—March 20-21: **BIG TIME SARAH.** March 22-23: **BOBBY RUSH.**

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Friday night is SqueezeBox, a vinyl-and-velvet gay glamfest, hosted by Mistress Formika.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—March 23: **THE FLYING NEUTRINOS.** This peripatetic New Orleans jazz band is a family affair. Cousins Ingrid Lucia, twenty-four, and Todd Lundagin, nineteen, lead the group. Lucia's lowdown singing, sassy patter, and mischievous grin are a lot like Billie Holiday's, and wonder boy Todd plays trombone, tap-dances, and has a disarming Chet Baker-style voice. They grew up playing the streets down South, took a brief detour through Europe, and wound up adrift in the East River on a homemade paddleboat. March 27: A double bill of top-shelf indie rock with **ELYSIAN FIELDS** and **LAZY BOY.** The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—**MORPHINE** (March 20) is a power trio with a twist: the band has no guitar player—just a drummer, a sax player, and a two-string bassist and vocalist. This skeletal instrumentation might sound like a drawback, but the group takes full advantage of its sonic limitations, weaving monstrous riffs in and around singer Mark Sandman's eerily sinister baritone. March 22: African diva **ANGELIQUE KIDJO.**

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest belowstairs room that looks like a spruced-up tenement apartment. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—March 21: **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS.** It's been a decade since John Flansburgh and John Linnell first performed jerky little pop songs while wearing improbably enormous masks. (They later observed that "everybody wants prosthetic foreheads on their real heads.") The Brooklyn-based duo has been unmasked for some time, but their jerky little pop songs—skillfully crafted and full of surreal humor—flow unabated, as their infamous Dial-a-Song (1-718 387-6962) happily attests. March 23: **FLAT DUO JETS.** March 24: Former Tin Machine guitarist (and occasional David Bowie sideman) **REEVES GABRELS,** who has a habit of playing his instrument with a vibrator.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—March 23: **THE MIGHTY SPARROW.** March 25: **MONGO SANTAMARIA.** Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**STEVE EARLE** (March 21) has had the kind of mythic life which makes for riveting song material. This is probably why his "Ellis Unit One" stands out on the soundtrack to "Dead Man Walking." The pain and fear he's singing about are in his bones (a recent possession charge landed him in jail). Having emerged in 1986 as a new-traditionalist country-rock rebel, Earle is continually edging toward tougher territory. With his new disk, "I Feel Alright," he's got it down pat. The songs are sparse and—unlike his guitar-cluttered mid-career albums—dirty to the core. His songs and his ravaged voice could make even the thickest-skinned listener tremble. March 22: Country rock with **BLUE RODEO.** March 23: **MARIA MC KEE.** The former warbler from Lone Justice hasn't had a hit since "Shelter," which came out in the late eighties. This may account for her stylistic change of heart on "Life Is Sweet," her third solo album. She throws her country-tinged approach out the window and rocks out with a vengeance, but to little avail.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—March 21: Moxy Fruvous. March 22: Cowboy Mouth.

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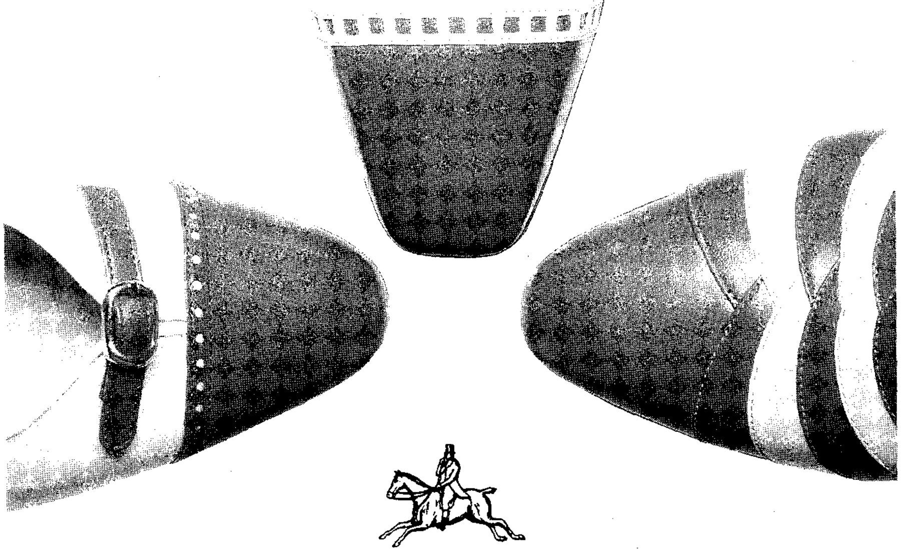

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ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Poussin: Works on Paper." A rich trove of drawings, from the collection of Queen Elizabeth II, by the greatest Classicist of the Baroque era. Through March 31. . . . ¶ A complementary exhibit of seventeenth-century French drawings from the museum's collection is also on display. . . . ¶ "Fabergé in America." Fifteen of the forty-four extant imperial Easter eggs are on view in this exhibit of works from American collections, along with more than four hundred baskets, vases, table clocks, cigarette boxes, and other delights. Through April 28. . . . ¶ "Enamels of Limoges," a slew of precious objects dating from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries—medallions, reliquaries, portable altars, and such—from the French town's abbey workshops. Through June 16. . . . ¶ Lesser-known and experimental color prints by artists employed by the W.P.A. Through May 26. . . . ¶ "Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

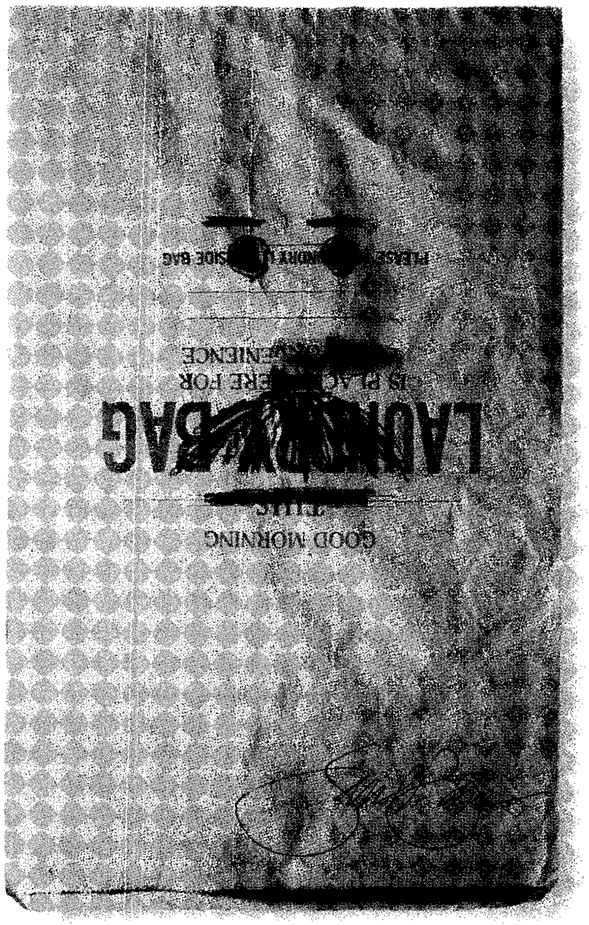
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Brancusi," a tantalizing mini-retrospective of twenty-four sculptures that represent the master at his best: the wood-and-limestone "Exotic Plant," at once primitive and unspeakably sophisticated; two big, comical oak cups; a set of four tilted heads, in bronze, plaster, and wood, so dreamy that you almost drift away; and the sublime gray-marble "Fish." Through April 23. . . . ¶ A large retrospective of black-and-white photographs from the late forties to the present by Roy DeCarava. Among the subjects are jazz musicians, street and subway life, and urban civil-rights protests. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Deformations: Aspects of the Modern Grotesque" features works in many mediums by such artists as Francis Bacon, Cindy Sherman, James Ensor, Philip Guston, and Eva Hesse. Through May 21. . . . ¶ Drawings, an architectural model, and documentary photographs provide an overview of the German designer Lilly Reich's work, which included several installations for clothing, housing, and building-materials expositions in the twenties and thirties. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Sol LeWitt Prints, 1970-1995." Through May 7. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline." This exhibition is chockablock with nonobjective masterpieces—from early Kandinskys and Maleviches to the mute totems of minimalism which have dominated abstract art since the sixties—but some of the elisions are galling. Where are Hans Hofmann, Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis? Why so few women? Why *nine* Rymans but not even one Marden? And why does this survey end, limply, with Martin Puryear and Richard Long, without including any artists who came to the fore after the seventies? Through May 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of a hundred assemblages, constructed from scavenged street and flea-market materials, by Edward Kienholz (1927-94) and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "Willem de Kooning's Door Cycle." A display of four paintings from the mid-sixties on long, narrow doors, supplemented by several related works and by photographs of de Kooning by Hans Namuth. Through May 26. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Amber: Window to the Past." Since the Mesolithic Period (9000-6000 B.C.), human beings have carved amulets out of fossilized tree resin. But all sorts of things—butterflies, tree frogs, geckos—were getting stuck in amber at a considerably earlier date; the oldest known fossils (on view here) are entrapped in ninety-four-million-year-old amber from New Jersey. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A large number of paintings, sculptures, costumes, and religious objects from the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru are on view in "Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America." . . . ¶ "Alone in a Crowd: Prints by African-American Artists from the 1930s-1940s." Through April 21. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)



Self-portrait by Saul Bass (School of Visual Arts).

American Academy of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—The academy's annual invitational exhibit includes paintings and sculptures by Rosemarie Beck, Debra Bermingham, Zachary Ehrenreich, Jim Nutt, and William Tucker. Through March 31. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A small exhibition of four pastel portraits and two oils by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, done in Paris in the turbulent seventeen-nineties. Through April 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Gaelic Gotham: A History of the Irish in New York" features more than four hundred paintings, prints, photographs, costumes, and other objects, from the museum's collection and on loan from many other institutions. . . . ¶ "The Talk of the Town: Rea Irvin of *The New Yorker*." Eighty-three covers and drawings, most of them from the artist's personal collection, which he donated to the museum in 1967. Through May 5. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"A Labor of Love" includes works by contemporary artists who use folk- or craft-oriented processes. Among the pieces on view are miniature chairs carved out of soap, by Michael Harms; sewn banana-peel slippers, by Nöle Guilini; cartoonish dolls, by Faith Ringgold; and Liza Lou's full-sized kitchen, entirely covered with small colored beads. Through April 14. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

New York Transit Museum, Boerum Pl. at Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn—"Rails and Shadows: The Last Days of the Third Avenue El." Photographer Ann Shanks rode the last Manhattan elevated line for three months prior to its demolition, in 1955, and produced an evocative, melancholy black-and-white record of its riders, workers, and stations. Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 10 to 4; Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Explorations in the City of Light" presents paintings and sculptures by seven African-American artists who lived in Paris between 1945 and 1965: Edward Clark, Barbara Chase-Riboud, Harold Cousins, Beauford Delaney, Herbert Gentry, Lois Mailou Jones, and Larry Potter. . . . ¶ "The Listening Sky," a display of works in the museum's new sculpture garden. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Vija Celmins—Recent paintings and drawings of the night sky, executed in the artist's trademark balance between abstraction and representation. Through April 5. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Robert Graham—Three new bronze female nudes, along with dozens of prints of the same models. Through April 20. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Valerie Jaudon—In these new grisaille paintings by a member of the seventies' pattern-and-decoration movement, the artist plays vaguely illusionistic, curtainlike stripes against curvilinear stencilled shapes. Through March 23. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

Jane Kaplowitz—A series of paintings in a Warholian mode, with captions and inventory numbers, based on the 1971 film "Death in Venice." Through April 13. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**ROBERT ARNESON** and **PHILIP WOFFORD,** Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through March 30. . . . **DREW BEATTIE AND DANIEL DAVIDSON,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through March 30. . . . **ROBERT BERLIND,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. Through April 6. . . . **JEAN DUBUFFET** and **GEORG BASELITZ,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. Through March 23. . . . **GLENN GOLDBERG,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. Through April 6. . . . **MORRIS GRAVES,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. Through March 30. . . . **EVA HESSE** and **ROBERTO JUAREZ,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 6. . . . **ANITA HUFFINGTON,** O'Hara, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 6. . . . **JACQUES LIPCHITZ,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through March 13. . . . **ANDREW MASULLO** and **KEITH HARING,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through March 30 and March 23, respectively. . . . **DONNA MOYLAN,** Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St. Through April 6. . . . **PORTIA MUNSON,** Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. Through April 20. . . . **RICHARD SERRA,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through April 13. . . . **KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. Through April 27.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Saul Bass—A retrospective of designs and logos (for AT&T, the Girl Scouts) and title sequences (for "West Side Story," "Spartacus," "The Age of Innocence") by the graphic-design master. Through April 5. (School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 9 to 8; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 5.)

Y. Z. Kami—Paintings and photographs mounted on canvas, by an Iranian-born artist. Kami's preferred subjects—dolorously sexy pseudo-Coptic ephebes with dark eyes and pouty lips—suggest a hilarious pastiche of Baron von Gloeden's beautiful boys, Caravaggio's hustlers, and Walter and Margaret Keane's big-eyed poster children. It's too bad the artist isn't more perceptive about his own campiness; some self-awareness might provide this well-executed work with a much-needed charge. Through March 30. (Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St.)

Stephen Prina / Steve Wolfe—Thirty-five photographs, mostly indecipherable notes, overlaid with computer-generated text fragments and bold planes of psychedelic-poster colors. The images have the sure graphic touch of nineteen-sixties fashion photography, without a trace of the glamour. / In oil, enamel, and modelling paste, this San Francisco-based artist has painstakingly re-created his lifetime collection of paperbacks ("On the Road," "In Cold Blood," Salinger's "Nine Stories") and records (Van Dyke Parks, the Beatles, Van Morrison). If you were in the class of '69, this will all be extremely familiar. Through March 30. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Gary Simmons—Large, cartoonish chalk drawings on the gallery walls, which have been covered with a blackboard-like paint. Through April 13. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

"Counterculture"—Subtitled "Alternative Information from the Underground Press to the Internet," this historical survey digs up more than a thousand newspapers, zines, digital publications, pamphlets, and other paraphernalia from the mid-sixties on. Through April 20. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

Group Show—For years, Mary Boone has served as a kind of poster girl for the wretchedly excessive art world of the eighties. Now, as a parting gesture to SoHo, she mounts a rare group show before moving to quieter, 57th Street environs. Some have suggested that her aim is to move downtown uptown. We'll see. For the moment, Leonardo Drew and Mark Francis offer nothing out of the ordinary for this perennially tasteful gallery: the former makes large, cumbersome wall reliefs composed of tritely "povera" materials (rusty metal, dirty fabric, string) and with a blandly Kounellis-like vibe; the latter paints wan abstractions that bear more than a passing resemblance to paintings by the Boone staple Ross Bleckner. The only surprise here is Oliver Herring, whose eerie work is inconspicuously installed in the rear gallery. His strange and beautiful sculptures of coats, in clear or reflective Mylar, are the only art here with any genuine flavor of the new. Through April 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Short List—**GHADA AMER,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through April 11. . . . **LOUISE BELCOURT,** Sundvik, 26 Grand St. Through March 23. . . . **BEVERLY BUCHANAN,** Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. Through April 20. . . . **JACK FEATHERLY** and **SCOTT GRODESKY,** Freire, 580 Broadway. Through March 30. . . . **RONI HORN,** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6; through April 14. . . . **SHARI MENDELSON** and **NANCY DIAMOND,** Black + Herron, 79 Grand St. Through April 20. . . . **DONA NELSON,** Klein, 40 Wooster St. Through April 6. . . . **ANTOINE PAOLETTI,** 123 Watts Gallery, 123 Watts St. Opens at noon; through April 4. . . . **BILL RICHARDS,** Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. Through April 13. . . . **ROBERT THERRIEN** and **CHRYSSA,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **KARA WALKER,** Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **NARI WARD,** Deitch, 76 Grand St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6; through April 6.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Sotheby's—March 22: Continental furniture. . . . ¶ March 23: An auction of fine wines, offered in conjunction with Sherry-Lehmann, the wine merchants, including large quantities of notable clarets and ten vintages of Romanée-Conti. . . . ¶ March 26: A sale of Chinese art works marks the opening of "Asian Arts Week." (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Christie's—March 21: Continental furniture. . . . ¶ March 26: Korean works of art, including a striking array of ceramics and bronzes as well as twentieth-century paintings. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . ¶ At Christie's East: March 26-27: Asian and European decorative arts. (219 E. 67th St.)

Doyle's—English and Continental furniture, paintings, and decorative art. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. March 20.)

Swann Galleries—Early printed books, including material deaccessioned by the New-York Historical Society. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. March 21.)

Salmagundi Club—Oils, watercolors, pastels, and graphic works by the club's members. (47 Fifth Ave., at 12th St. March 22 at 8:30. 255-7740. A similar sale will be held on March 29.)

Coliseum Antiques Show—Three hundred dealers gather to purvey a bit of everything. (New York Coliseum, Columbus Circle. March 23, from 10 to 7, and March 24, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door.)

Armory Antiques Show—A hundred or so dealers, in a wide-ranging show. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. March 20-24. Tickets at the door.)

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Adams—This veteran chronicler of suburban environments and the American West has said his goal is "to discover a tension so exact that it is peace." Most of the three dozen black-and-white pictures here—tract houses in the Denver flats, monumental, smog-blanketed vistas, littered prairies—are lucid reflections of our uneasy coexistence with the landscape and of nature's plainspoken beauty. Given these apparently irreconcilable elements, it's surprising to see how often Adams has achieved his goal. Through March 23. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Harry Callahan—A survey of the many different themes and variations the photographer has explored, in black-and-white and color, since the forties. Through April 6. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Fred W. McDarrah—A satisfying exhibit of nearly a hundred documentary photographs of New York artists, by the longtime *Village Voice* photojournalist and picture editor. Made between 1958 and 1978, the pictures show Johns, Kline, Oldenburg, de Kooning, Cadmus, and many others at work, and sometimes at play, in studios, at the Cedar Tavern, and at gallery openings. Through March 23. (Art et Industrie, 52 Thompson St.)

Sheila Metzner / Judith Joy Ross—These dramatically lit, richly tinted photographs of great monuments recapture the exciting sense of discovery and the perfumed atmosphere of old *National Geographic* photographs. Metzner uses the Fresson process (which combines carbon and pigment in the prints) to impart density and texture to images of the Great Pyramids at Giza, the stone heads of Easter Island, and a waterfall in Venezuela. / Ross offers deliberate archaism of a different sort. Known for her groups of portraits—children at play, veterans, congressmen—this time she takes on the schoolchildren of Hazleton, Pennsylvania (her hometown): little girls in pinafores, kids rehearsing the Christmas pageant, dippy high-school sweethearts. If it weren't for the Pearl Jam T-shirts, you might think you were looking at a rerun of "The Donna Reed Show." Through April 6. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)—Portraits of art-world figures (Betty Parsons, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko) by the pioneering New York School painter. Through April 13. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St.)

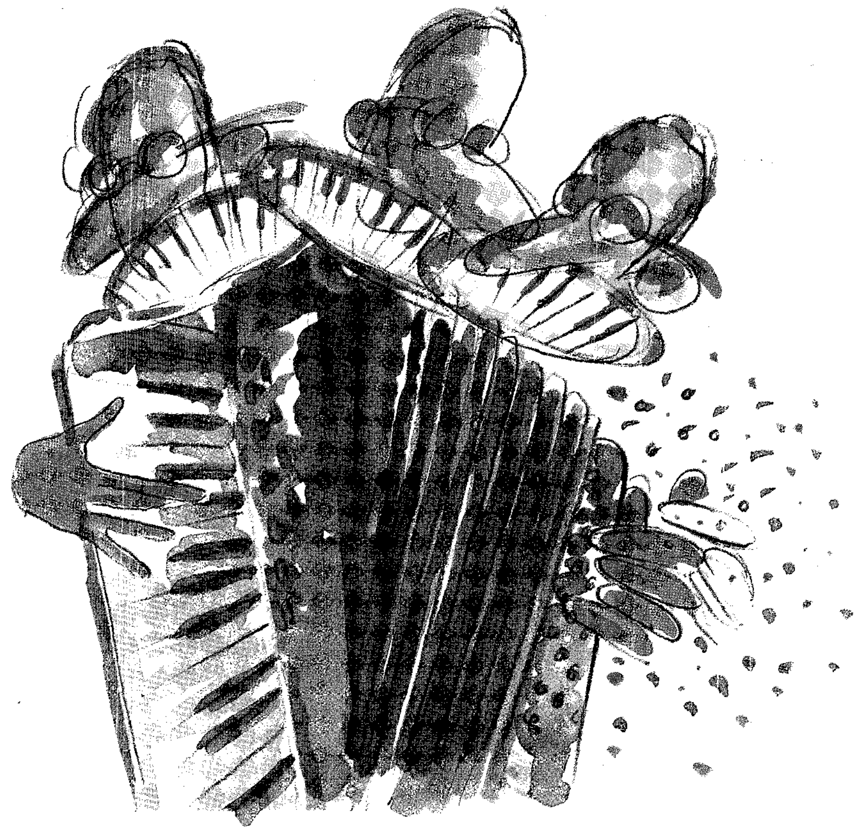
International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Intimate Nature: Ansel Adams and the Close View." Closeups that complement the artist's panoramic visions. Through June 2. . . . ¶ "Country Beside Itself," Lars Tunbjörk's colorful, idiosyncratic exploration of Sweden's changing commercial and leisure pursuits. Through March 22. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

"The Krappy Kamera Show"—The third annual roundup of images made with extremely lo-tech toys, homemade contraptions, and such. Through March 30. (SoHo Photo, 15 White St., between West Broadway and Sixth Ave. Open Fridays through Sundays, 1 to 6, and Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8.)

"USSR in Construction, 1930-1940"—Vintage photographs and photomontages published in that Soviet propaganda journal, by Max Alpert, Arkady Shaikhet, Georgi Zelma, Boris Ignatovich, and others. Through April 27. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

Short List—**BRUCE CRATSLEY,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **JED DEVINE,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through April 13. . . . **MACDUFF EVERTON,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **LEONARD FREED,** Leica, 670 Broadway. Through April 24. . . . **CANDIDA HÖFER,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **CONNIE IMBODEN** and **VICTOR FRIEDMAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through April 13. . . . **BILL JACOBSON,** Saul, 560 Broadway. Through March 23. . . . **BUILDER LEVY,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through March 30. . . . **RAY K. METZKER** and **THOMAS BARROW,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through April 13. . . . **CATHERINE OPIE,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through March 30. . . . **LEEANNE SCHMIDT,** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through March 23. . . . **ARTHUR TRESS,** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through May 11. . . . **DAVID VESTAL,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through April 27.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New York Transit Museum.)



Guy Klucevsek, at Merkin Concert Hall.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**SALOME,** with Catherine Malfitano, Hanna Schwarz, Kenneth Riegel, and Bernd Weikl; conducted by Donald Runnicles. (March 20 and March 26 at 8:30.) . . . With Greer Grimsley instead of Mr. Weikl. (March 23 at 8:30.) . . . **LA FORZA DEL DESTINO,** with Sharon Sweet, Gloria Scalchi, Sergej Larin, Vladimir Chernov, and Roberto Scandiuzzi; Franz Vote. (March 21 at 8.) . . . With James Levine conducting. (March 25 at 8.) . . . **THE VOYAGE,** by Philip Glass, with Patricia Schuman, Sally Burgess, Philip Creech, and Timothy Noble; Dennis Russell Davies. (March 22 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN,** with Denyce Graves, Veronica Villarroel, Richard Margison, and Sergei Leiferkus; John Fiore. (March 23 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—**DER ROSENKAVALIER.** (March 20 at 8 and March 26 at 6:30.) . . . **TOSCA.** (March 22 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME.** (March 23 at 1:30.) . . . **THE MERRY WIDOW.** (March 23 at 8.) . . . **ATTILA,** by Verdi. (March 24 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. Opening concerts of a two-week Beethoven festival that will feature Alfred Brendel as the soloist in all five of the composer's piano concertos. March 20 and March 22 at 8: The "Leonore" Overture No. 1 and the Piano Concertos No. 1 and No. 3. . . . ¶ March 23 at 8: The "Leonore" Overture No. 1 and the Symphonies No. 2 and No. 7. . . . ¶ March 26 at 7:30: The "Leonore" Overture No. 2 and the Piano Concertos No. 2 and No. 4. (875-5030.) . . . **NOTE:** On March 24 at 3, Michael Steinberg will moderate a discussion between Messrs. Masur and Brendel, at Alice Tully Hall. (No tickets necessary.)

Returning Thanks—Last October, musical New York suffered the loss of one of its most enthusiastic audience members with the passing of Thomas Newbold Morgan, a ubiquitous, eccentric presence in New York's concert halls. Judicious scheduling enabled him to consume a weekly diet of eight or nine concerts, preferably programs stressing obscure repertoire; he could be easily spotted in any gathering thanks to his unwavering allegiance to the crewcut and to a vest pocket bulging with paper (widely known as "Tom's portable file cabinet"). He also put his money where his ears were, providing much-appreciated benefactions to smaller organizations (usually with the plea that they avoid performing Dvořák, his least-favorite composer). In this concert, ensembles and musicians whose endeavors he supported salute his memory: the Jupiter Symphony, conducted by Jens Nygaard; harpsichordist Gerald Ranck; Clarion Concerts, directed by Newell Jenkins (performing Bach's Cantata No. 199, with soprano Julianne Baird); the Western Wind vocal sextet; and Music Before 1800 Productions, directed by Louise Basbas in Giacomo Carissimi's seventeenth-century oratorio "Jephte." (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. March 20 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Ascension Music—The choir and orchestra perform Mozart's "Coronation" Mass and Requiem (in the traditional completion by the composer's pupil Franz Xaver Süssmayr), with Dennis Keene directing. (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. March 21 at 8.)

Collegiate Chorale and Orchestra of St. Luke's—Robert Bass directs Mozart's C-Minor Mass and "Vesperae Solennes de Confessore"; with

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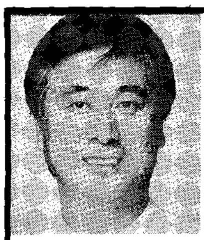

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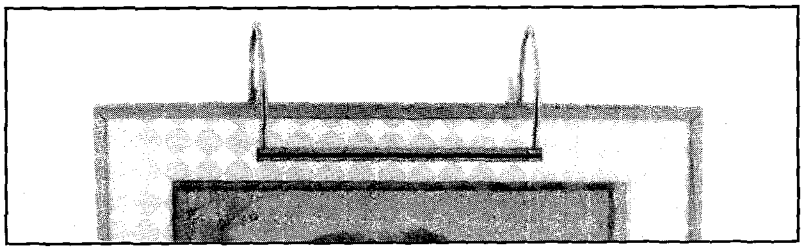

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sopranos Heidi Grant Murphy and Dominique Labelle, tenor Steven Tharp, and bass Arthur Woodley. (Carnegie Hall. March 22 at 8.)

Manhattan School of Music Symphony—Glen Cortese leads Mahler's massive Symphony No. 8. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. March 22 at 8 and March 24 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Cellists Carter Brey and Dorothy Lawson are the soloists in "L'Olmoneta," a double concerto composed in 1951 by Giorgio Federico Ghedini. Also on the program are Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme" (with Mr. Brey) and Vittorio Rieti's "La Fontaine Suite" (narrated by Lloyd Moss). Richard Kapp conducts. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 23 at 7.)

Los Angeles Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting. March 24 at 3: Bartók's "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta" and Mahler's Symphony No. 4 (with soprano Joan Rodgers). . . . ¶ March 25 at 7:30: Stravinsky was still a fledgling composer floundering about with late-Romantic harmonies when he wrote his Symphony in E-Flat (Op. 1, from 1905-07), but his later efforts in that genre provide fascinating insight into the stylistic variety he was to cover. This program offers all four of those later works: the "Symphonies of Wind Instruments" (1920, the title of which, according to the composer, was really meant to suggest the "coming together of sounds" more than the orchestral genre), the neoclassical Symphony in C (1938-39), the "Symphony of Psalms" (1930, also a symphony only in name, here performed with the Westminster Choir), and the emotionally intense Symphony in Three Movements (1942-45). (875-5030.)

Bach's B-Minor Mass—Why settle for just once through? March 24 at 3: The Choir and Orchestra of Trinity Church, Owen Burdick directing. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. 602-0873.) . . . ¶ March 26 at 7:30: Gerre Hancock leads the Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys, Concert Royal, and soloists Julianne Baird (soprano), Jennifer Lane (mezzo-soprano), Dana March (countertenor), Gregory Carder (tenor), and Curtis Streetman (baritone). (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013, ext. 3027.)

BachWorks—Presenting Bach's Cantatas No. 23 and No. 98, directed by Richard Erickson. (St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. March 24 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Orchestra of the S. E. M. Ensemble—Music by Cage and other "moderns," plus a recently unearthed suite by Telemann. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 25 at 8.)

RECITALS

"Voices of the Spirit"—Soprano Dawn Upshaw's chamber-music series continues with works that describe crises of faith: the first of Couperin's "Leçons de Ténèbres," Bach's Cantata No. 199 (staged by Peter Sellars), and music by Bloch, Bernstein, and Jacob Druckman. Soprano Lisa Saffer, mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt, pianist Margo Garrett, conductor John Harbison, and a period-instrument ensemble assist. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 20 at 8.)

Van Swieten String Quartet—This Boston-based period-instrument foursome takes its name from Baron Gottfried van Swieten, the Dutch-born diplomat and Viennese court librarian—and ardent music lover—who supported Mozart (financially and politically) and wrote the librettos for Haydn's "The Creation" and "The Seasons." In its New York début recital, the ensemble plays quartets by both those composers—Mozart's "Dissonance" Quartet, Haydn's in D Major (Op. 20, No. 4)—as well as Beethoven's Quartet in F Major (Op. 18, No. 1). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. March 20 at 8.)

Bargemusic—An all-Mozart program, including both of the composer's piano quartets.

(Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 21 at 7:30 and March 24 at 4.)

David Starobin—Classical guitarist, performing Elliott Carter's "Changes," Andrés Segovia's "Five Anecdotes," works by Fernando Sor and Giulio Regondi, and (with baritone Patrick Mason) a song cycle by Michael Starobin (the guitarist's brother) based on Wallace Stevens poems, as well as two of Starobin *frère's* arrangements from Sondheim's "Sunday in the Park with George"—or perhaps one should say rearrangements, since Michael Starobin was the orchestrator for the original Broadway production. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. March 21 at 8.)

Los Angeles New Music Group—Presenting recent works by Steven Stucky, Jouni Kaipainen, and Esa-Pekka Salonen (who will also lead the ensemble in Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 22 at 8.)

Carter and Conversation—The redoubtable composer Elliott Carter chats with pianist Ursula Oppens; Ms. Oppens and several colleagues perform a half dozen of the composer's works (including "Triple Duo"). (Weill Recital Hall. March 22 at 8.)

Maurizio Pollini—The pianist concludes his survey of Beethoven's sonatas with performances of the last three. (Carnegie Hall. March 23 at 7:30.)

Guy Klucevsek—The accordion, fraught with images of Myron Floren and "Lady of Spain," has a reputation for frightening off anyone with a delicate sensibility. Guy Klucevsek may convert them. During the past twenty-five years he's carved out a place for himself as something of a rebel in contemporary music, commissioning major pieces from more than fifty avant-garde composers, writing compelling works of his own, and, in the process, earning a measure of respect for his beleaguered instrument among serious listeners. In this recital, he'll perform nine solo-accordion works composed for him since 1990, by Mary Ellen Childs, William Duckworth, Aaron Jay Kernis, Jerome Kitzke (a première), Stephen Montague, the elegiac Somei Satoh, and the hyperactive Lois V Vierk (a première), as well as three of his own "Microids," whose titles alone merit attention: "My Right Foot, on the Other Hand," "Eleven Large Lobsters Loose in the Lobby," and "Bustin' Broncos in the Balkans." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. March 23 at 8.)

Cecilia Bartoli and András Schiff—This duo has repeatedly proved to be greater than the sum of its very impressive parts. In this recital, the mezzo-soprano and the pianist offer works by Beethoven, Schubert, Haydn, and Rossini. (Carnegie Hall. March 24 at 3.)

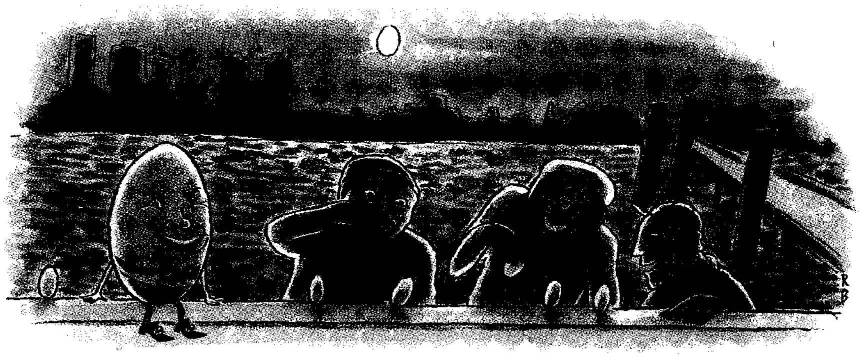
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Egg on a Roll—Spring finally slinks in on March 20, at 3:03 A.M., and for the twentieth year in a row, Donna Henes, urban shaman, greets the new season with her vernal-equinox egg-balancing act. At that unearthly hour (she begins at 2:45 A.M., at Christopher St. and the Hudson River), Henes expects fewer celebrants than usual, but no matter the hour, she says, people always come out. "We start doing an invocation, and then a countdown to spring, and then we just try to balance the eggs. It gets very silent—we get people totally concentrating on their own egg—until you finally hear someone say 'Oh! Oh! I did it.' It's simple, deceptively simple. The eggs don't have to be room temperature, they don't have to be fertile, I don't even know if they have to be chicken eggs." Henes laughs, "Somebody once sent me a picture of an egg balanced on a cabin cruiser in the Caribbean." (For more information, call 1-718 857-2247.)

Material Culture—To mark the eighty-fifth anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire (a hundred and forty-six seamstresses died in less than twenty minutes), an N.Y.U. symposium, "Fashion Victims: Labor, Spectacle, and Policy," looks at the seamier side of the industry. Christy and Kate probably won't show, but Katrina (vanden Heuvel, the editor of *The Nation*) will moderate a discussion on garment assembly lines, with pop-culturist Andrew Ross and Nicole Miller honcho Bud Konheim. "Many people wear very expensive clothes," says Danyun Feng, the UNITE organizer who heads the Sunset Park Workers Center and will appear at Saturday's panel on industry globalization. "But they don't really know what's happening to the workers." (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Square S.—across the park from the Shirtwaist sweatshop—at Macdougal St. March 23-24, from 2 to 6. For more information, call 998-3720.)

Readings—March 20 at 7:30: Poets Nicholas Christopher, Albert Goldbarth, and Roberta Hill Whiteman read in the Hayden Planetarium for the Poetry Society of America's Poetry Under the Stars series. (Central Park W. at 81st St. For more information, call 254-9628.) . . . ¶ March 20 at 8: Poets Leslie Scalapino ("Considering How Exaggerated Music Is") and Jordan Davis ("A Little Gold Book") read from their work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ March 24 at 3: Poets Jane Cooper and Elizabeth Macklin, novelist Francine Prose, and essayist Phillip Lopate read from their work. (Civic Center Synagogue, 49 White St. Tickets at the door on the day of the reading.)

Talks—March 21 at 8:30 A.M.: Publisher Harold Evans hosts a breakfast chat about the unexpurgated "Huckleberry Finn" with Karen Finley, John Kenneth Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Sister Souljah. (mad.61, 10 E. 61st St. For reservations, call 940-7480.) . . . ¶ March 21 at 6:30: Dance historian Adam Pinsker talks about the roots of tap dancing in Irish hard-shoe dance, slave dances like the buzzard lope, and minstrel-show standards like the buck and wing. (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 26 at 6: In a slide presentation called "Women and the Light," City Island resident Katherine Kirkpatrick illuminates the history of women lighthouse keepers. (South Street Seaport Museum, Low Building, 171 John St. For more information, call 748-8590.)



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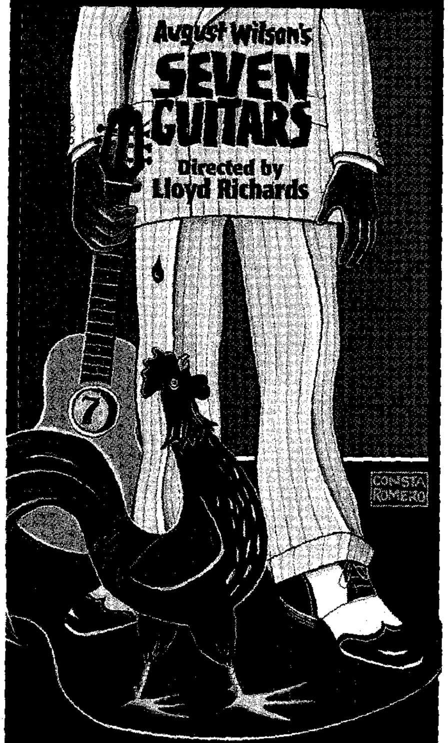

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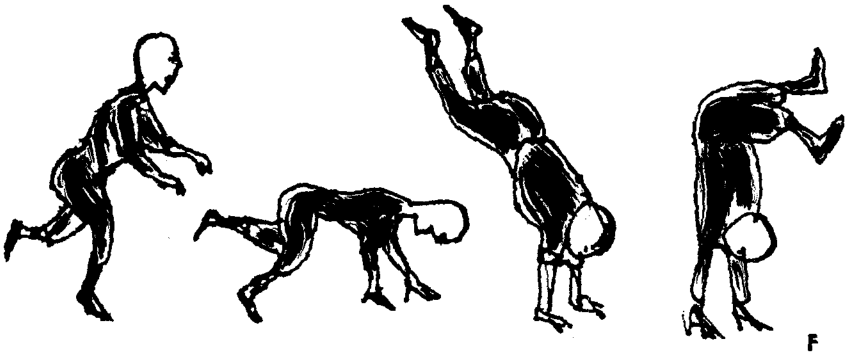


THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Diabolique—Sharon Stone (mistress) and Isabelle Adjani (wife) set out to murder the man (Chazz Palminteri) each of them is sleeping with, in a thriller directed by Jeremiah Chechik. With Kathy Bates. Based on the 1955 French film. Opening March 22. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 72nd Street East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Flirting with Disaster—An adopted scientist (Ben Stiller) hunts down his biological parents in a comedy written and directed by David O. Russell. With Patricia Arquette. Opening March 22. (Cinema II, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Frisk—Todd Verow's film about sex, violence, and murder in California. With Craig Chester, Michael Gunther, James Lyons, and Parker Posey. Based on Dennis Cooper's 1991 novel; written by James Dwyer, George LaVoo, and the director. Opening March 22. (Quad Cinema.)

Girl 6—Theresa Randle plays an aspiring actress (who makes a living as a phone-sex operator) in this comedy directed by Spike Lee. With John Turturro, Jenifer Lewis, Quentin Tarantino, Naomi Campbell, Lee, Halle Berry, and Madonna. Written by Suzan-Lori Parks. Opening March 22. (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

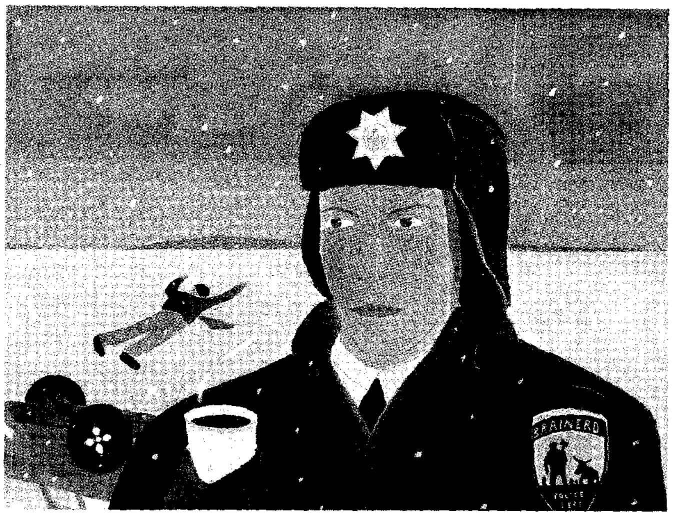
It's My Party—A drama written and directed by Randal Kleiser about an AIDS-afflicted architect (Eric Roberts) who throws a two-day farewell party. With Gregory Harrison, Marlee Matlin, and Lee Grant. Opening March 22. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Jack & Sarah—A romantic comedy, written and directed by Tim Sullivan, in which a single father (Richard E. Grant) has to choose between the young woman (Samantha Mathis) he hired to care for his infant daughter and a partner at his law firm (Cherie Lunghi). With Judi Dench and Ian McKellen. Opening March 22. (Beekman and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Little Indian, Big City—A Parisian businessman (Thierry Lhermitte) brings his teen-age son (Ludwig Briand)—raised by his estranged wife (Miou Miou) in a South American jungle—home to the City of Light, in a comedy written and directed by Hervé Palud. With Arielle Dombasle. Opening March 22. (Embassy 2.)

Lotto Land—A young Brooklyn man (Larry Gilliard) spends his life savings on lottery tickets, in a drama written and directed by John Rubino. With Wendell Holmes, Suzanne Costallos, and Barbara Gonzalez. Opening March 22. (Quad Cinema.)

Race the Sun—Halle Berry and James Belushi star as high-school teachers in Charles T. Kanganis's drama about a group of non-achievers who build a solar-powered car for a science project. Written by Barry Morrow. Opening March 22. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)



Frances McDormand in "Fargo."

GEOFFREY PARKER

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 30.)

Babe—Despite the improbable articulateness of the creatures in Chris Noonan's wonderfully imaginative talking-animal movie, they remain in character as animals: the movie never lets us forget that they don't see the world the same way we do. The title character is a piglet who wants to be a sheepdog. Babe and his friends—notably, a farmwise duck and a pair of proud Border collies—act out a comedy of animal manners that is much funnier and much cannier than any recent movie about human relationships: a lovely, stubbornly idiosyncratic fable of aspiration and survival.—T.R. (9/4/95) (Manhattan Twin.)

The Birdcage—Mike Nichols's remake of "La Cage aux Folles" (1978) largely contents itself with decking out what appears to be a profoundly, unalterably French farce in American drag—changing the locale from Saint-Tropez to Miami and then hoping that the story, in its cheerful new costume, will still play. It does. But the cautious, sensible approach taken by Nichols and his screenwriter, Elaine May, has the drawback of making this movie feel a little, as the French might say, de trop. Although Robin Williams and Nathan Lane, as the bickering middle-aged lovers originally played by Ugo Tognazzi and Michel Serrault, are skillful, the script doesn't give them much opportunity to distinguish themselves from their memorable predecessors. Oddly, the funniest performer here is Gene Hackman, playing an aggressively straight, family-values-spouting politician. Hackman's deadpan inanity is sublimely comic; he turns a rambling, inarticulate monologue on the beauties of the American landscape into an aria of dullness. Also with Dianne Wiest, Hank Azaria, Dan Futterman, and Christine Baranski.—T.R. (3/18/96) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Broken Arrow—John Travolta plays a disgruntled Air Force pilot who hijacks a couple of nuclear warheads. This is not, however, a standard-issue doomsday thriller, but a spectacularly nutty and entertaining chase picture; the director, John Woo—who is best known for his delirious Hong Kong gangster movies—tosses off risky stunts and eye-popping effects like one-liners. The hero and the heroine, played by Christian Slater and Samantha Mathis, are likable, but the character to watch is Travolta, who brings a refreshingly all-American exuberance to action-movie villainy. Screenplay by Graham Yost (who also wrote "Speed").—T.R. (2/19/96) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

The Celluloid Closet—Directors Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman have turned the late Vito Russo's 1981 study of gay and lesbian characters in the movies into a fabulous look at queer culture and the way it has been perceived through the decades. Epstein and Friedman don't share Russo's rage: this is a forgiving look back, more thoughtful than angry in its assessment of the industry's limitations. The sincere narration, written by Armistead Maupin and delivered by Lily Tomlin, is very PBS, but the tone shifts entertainingly whenever the directors turn to interviews, with the likes of Maupin, Harvey Fierstein, Susan Sarandon, and the incandescent Susie Bright, all of whom bring humor and great understanding to the clips. And while the gay characters cited are sometimes villainous ("Cruising"), suicidal ("The Children's Hour"), and self-pitying ("The Boys in the Band"), they're also glamorous ("Morocco"), funny ("Lover Come Back"), and compassionate ("Longtime Companion"). The movie is a gripping testament not only to the industry's homophobia but also, via the interviews, to a neglected audience's desperate longing for any glimpse, any reflection on the screen, of the life it led. It's no longer a secret that many of the films in question were written, directed, or acted in by gay men and women, and that irony gives the picture a greater depth than you find in most Hollywood compilations.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Chungking Express—Arriving on a rolling thunder of advance hype and an endorsement from Quentin Tarantino, this Hong Kong import—directed by Wong Kar-Wai—consists of two loosely connected stories about lovesick policemen captivated by mysterious women. One dame (Brigitte Lin Chin-Hsia) is a drug smuggler disguised in a blond wig and sunglasses, the other (Faye Wang) a kooky chicklet in a fast-food joint who swings her head as she listens endlessly to "California Dreamin'." Although the film snakes its way through the packed and labyrinthine shopping arcades of Hong Kong (there are few patches of natural light), "Chungking Express" is no romping, stomping John Woo-Jackie Chan blood-squib festival—it's a romantic comedy tickled silly by its own dopey cuteness. It dotes on its lonely-guy heroes as they dote on themselves. The first cop (Takeshi Kaneshiro) ponders the expiration dates on cans of pineapple, asking if love has a past-due date, too. The second (Tony Leung Chin-Wai) steps into his flooded apartment and wonders if it's been weeping in his absence. The film is so talky, repetitious, visually stuttery, and slackly paced that sitting through it once is like seeing it twice. For cultists only. In Cantonese and Mandarin.—J.W. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Dead Man Walking—Tim Robbins's blunt, powerful movie tells the story of a murderer (Sean Penn) awaiting execution and a nun (Susan Sarandon) trying to save his soul—and, if possible, his skin. The filmmaker clearly hopes that familiarity with the grisly realities of capital punishment will finally breed contempt for the idea of premeditated, state-sponsored killing. And although the picture sometimes turns clunky and flat, as if it were sagging under the weight of its good intentions, it winds up being devastatingly effective. Penn has to reveal, within a reckless and apparently despicable character, a salvageable soul, and he makes the erratic rhythm of the condemned man's spiritual progress seem effortless and natural: he captures the languid, insinuating tempo of grace invading a locked-up spirit.—T.R. (1/8/96) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Fargo—In order to settle his debts, an automobile salesman has his wife kidnapped, in a drama directed by Joel Coen, who co-wrote the screenplay with Ethan Coen. With William H. Macy, Steve Buscemi, and Frances McDormand. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

The Flower of My Secret—Pedro Almodóvar's latest comedy, in which a newspaper editor (Juan Echanove) unwittingly hires a romance novelist (Marisa Paredes), who writes under a pseudonym, to review her own books. In Spanish. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

From the Journals of Jean Seberg—Mark Rappaport's film essay is an imaginary monologue in which the late actress (superbly played by Mary Beth Hurt) meditates on her troubled life. The real Seberg was discovered, as an Iowa teen-ager, by Otto Preminger, who handed her leading roles in "Saint Joan" and "Bonjour Tristesse"; she later starred in Godard's "Breathless," became involved in radical politics, was persecuted by the F.B.I., and died—an apparent suicide—in 1979, at the age of forty. Rappaport's Seberg delivers a detached, ironic running commentary on a series of clips and stills illustrating her erratic career; what's moving about the film is that this woman is a ghost, bitterly aware that the smart ideas she's reeling off never occurred to her during her time on earth. Seeing herself clearly for the first time, she seems to know that the image she's looking at is still a kind of illusion: a trick of time and distance, like the cold, useless light of a dead star.—T.R. (3/18/96) (Angelika 57.)

If Lucy Fell—A bleak, annoyingly quirky Gen-X recasting of the "When Harry Met Sally" notion that true love is based on friendship. Eric Schaeffer, who wrote and directed, also stars, as Joe, a painter who harbors an infantile crush on a gorgeous stranger (Elle Macpherson) while his roommate (Sarah Jessica Parker) carries on with a pompous downtown artist (Ben Stiller, hammy in dreadlocks). Parker is as charming as the script allows, but the plot is both contrived and morbid (the title refers to a red-herring suicide threat), and Joe is simply too self-absorbed to be sympathetic. It's not a good sign when Elle Macpherson plays the wise

When you're old enough to
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adult presence and outclasses the rest of the cast.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, Gemini, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Institute Benjamenta—The first live-action feature by the animators known as the Brothers Quay ("Street of Crocodiles") is an adaptation of a short novel, "Jakob von Gunten," by the eccentric Swiss modernist Robert Walser. The action—such as it is—takes place in a turn-of-the-century school for servants, run by the creepy Herr Benjamenta (Gottfreid John) and his sister (Alice Krige), who is beautiful, nervous, and remote. Both Benjamentas exhibit a rather unhealthy interest in a new student named Jakob (Mark Rylance), and for a hundred-and-five minutes the three main characters drift through stark rooms and impossibly long corridors (photographed, in luminous black and white, by Nic Knowland) in a bizarre erotic reverie. The presence of flesh-and-blood actors has remarkably little effect on the Quays' unique, densely lyrical image-making. Too little. Individual sequences are brilliantly inventive, but at feature length the filmmakers' rigorous aesthetic—no narrative, no psychology, and virtually no humor—becomes oppressive, and their distinctive vision feels less like a revelatory dream than like a heavy and unshakable stupor.—T.R. (Film Forum.)

Knocks at My Door—A spare, old-fashioned thriller about two nuns in a fictional Latin American town who risk execution when they shelter a fugitive. It was made in Venezuela in 1993, but the director, Alejandro Saderman, is from Argentina; maybe that's why the political backdrop feels so fuzzy and generic. (There's a civil war going on, but we never find out when it began or what it's about.) Only the tough performances by Veronica Oddo and Elba Escobar, as the nuns, take us beyond the didactic. In Spanish.—S.K. (Angelika 57.)

Land and Freedom—Ian Hart plays an idealistic young Briton who joins the anti-Fascists, in Ken Loach's drama about the Spanish Civil War. With Rosana Pastor. Written by Jim Allen. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," on which this movie is loosely based, tells the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda on Isla Negra, the corner of Chile where the poet spent much of his later life. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Rumble in the Bronx—If Jackie Chan's new American film, about stolen diamonds and the mob, lacks the inspired lunacy of his Hong Kong classics, it's still fine as a ninety-minute Jackie Chan primer; breaking an ankle during filming (he wears a cast painted as a sneaker) probably put a crimp in his artistry. While almost all of the actors are bad (they appear to have been cast mainly for how well their flying bodies can destroy the furniture), Chan has the beautiful, eager confidence of a movie star who loves his work. Directed by Stanley Tong.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Sense and Sensibility—The director, Ang Lee, and the screenwriter, Emma Thompson, turn Jane Austen's first published novel into a gracious and unfailingly pleasant entertainment. Thompson also plays the very sensible heroine, Elinor Dashwood, and carries the movie without overwhelming her fellow-actors. (Alan Rickman and Kate Winslet are especially good; the only clinker is a grotesquely mannered performance by Hugh Grant as Elinor's suitor.) If the picture pressed its temperate charms on us any harder, they would be much easier to resist.—T.R. (12/18/95) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Up Close & Personal—It's blonde on blond as Michelle Pfeiffer and Robert Redford, playing a rookie TV reporter and a veteran newshound, dazzle each other (but not us) in a buttery romance directed by Jon Avnet. Sausaged into tight, tarty outfits, Pfeiffer's Tally Atwater is so anxious to please that she keeps spilling things, on air and off. Under the tutoring of Redford's Warren Justice, a news director whose rugged individualism seems right out of a J. Peterman catalog, she learns to breathe and treat the camera as her confidant. "She eats the lens," he marvels, in the movie's one memorable line. It's only a matter of script pages until their mentoring sessions turn into a peroxide explosion of movie-star amour. As Tally rises in the news biz, Warren dips, which makes things touchy in the love department—or would, if this movie took the trouble to invade their privacy. A neutered replay of "A Star Is Born," written by Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne (who did the 1976 Barbra Streisand–Kris Kristofferson version), "Up Close & Personal" has no glamorous crackups or self-destructive lurches, though it does throw in a prison riot. Its lovers simply decouple and drift apart in zero gravity. (Redford winces to show he cares.) Squandered in supporting roles are Kate Nelligan, Stockard Channing, and Joe Mantegna, whose power suits seem to wear him.—J.W. (3/11/96) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

across the sea of time: Lincoln Square. . . . **the american president** (reviewed in our issue of 11/20/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **angels & insects** (1/29/96): Village Theatre VII and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **anne frank remembered:** Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **antonia's line:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **apollo 13** (7/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **beautiful girls:** Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . **braveheart** (6/5/95): 72nd Street East. . . . **casino** (12/4/95): National Twin. . . . **city hall** (2/19/96): Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . **the city of lost children:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **down periscope:** Regency. . . . **ed:** 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, 23rd St. West Triplex, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin. . . . **executive decision:** Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . **french twist** (1/15/96): Quad Cinema. . . . **get shorty** (10/23/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **hate (la haine):** Village Theatre VII. . . . **heat** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Criterion Center. . . . **heavy metal:** Criterion Center. . . . **hellraiser: bloodline:** 19th Street East 6, 59th Street East Cinema, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza. . . . **homeward bound II: lost in san francisco:** Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Embassy 2. . . . **last summer in the hamptons:** Angelika 57. . . . **man of the year:** Village East Cinemas and Cinema 3rd Avenue. . . . **mighty aphrodite** (10/30/95): 68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **mr. holland's opus** (1/29/96): Cinema II and Lincoln Square. . . . **nico icon:** Film Forum. . . . **nixon:** Embassy 4. . . . **nueba yol:** Embassy 3. . . . **once upon a time . . . when we were colored:** First & 62nd Cinemas and Olympia. . . . **persuasion** (9/25/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **sabrina** (12/25/95-1/1/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **seven:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **the star maker:** Paris. . . . **taxi driver:** Film Forum. . . . **too much:** Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1. . . . **12 monkeys** (1/22/96): 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **waiting to exhale** (1/15/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **the white balloon:** Quad Cinema. . . . **who killed teddy bear?:** Quad Cinema. . . . **the young poisoner's handbook:** Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini 1 and 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Alphaville (1965)—Jean-Luc Godard ventures into science fiction, with mixed results. The picture is brilliant, yet it's no good. Godard found enough of the future in present-day Paris to create a vision of a new world without constructing sets; it's a sleek, dark, glittering society—at first, the dehumanization is funny and alluring and a little eerie. The modern corridors and ramps and the flickering lights suggest something almost supernaturally impersonal. But the people of Alphaville are ruled by a giant computer, and soullessness can be very monotonous. The movie was shot at night, and it seems to give off powerfully soporific vapors, especially since the comic-strip story is an uninspired mixture of sci-fi and private eye which never takes hold. With Eddie Constantine as cool, tough Lemmy Caution (his face is so tired and leathery he's like an old shoe); Anna Karina—she's the most radiant of robots; and Akim Tamiroff. Written and directed by Godard. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; March 26.)

The Fugitive Kind (1960)—In Tennessee Williams and Meade Roberts' adaptation of Williams's play "Orpheus Descending," Marlon Brando has minutes of brilliance as a guitar-playing, thwarted free spirit—especially in his reverie about birds that live their whole life in the sky and "light on this earth but one time when they die." (In his marvelous book, "Making Movies," the director, Sidney Lumet, describes how he gently nudged Brando through thirty-four takes of this emblematic speech.) Brando's gift for seeming to catch poetry on the fly is uncanny; unfortunately, few of his films have ever been in greater need of it. For as Brando's Orpheus figure falls in love with a small-town shopkeeper's wife (Anna Magnani) and, yes, renews her life (as if the volcanic Magnani needed a wake-up call), the script surrounds its lyric peaks with Southern-gothic dross. Lumet now thinks that he and cinematographer Boris Kaufman "went a bit too far" in the final act. So did Tennessee Williams. The cast includes Joanne Woodward, Maureen Stapleton, and R. G. Armstrong, with Victory Jory oozing malice as Magnani's ailing husband.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; March 24.)

Guys and Dolls (1955)—Samuel Goldwyn's big, beribboned version of the Broadway musical that Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows took from Damon Runyon's stories about lovable lowlifes, with a score by Frank Loesser. The director-scenarist Joseph L. Mankiewicz seems to have fallen in love with Damon Runyon's cute, stilted locutions; the camera stands still while the actors mince through lines like "This is no way for a gentleman to act and could lead to irritation on the part of Harry the Horse." Frank Sinatra is the crap-game proprietor who bets Marlon Brando that he can't lure strait-laced Jean Simmons, a mission worker, into going to Havana with him. Sinatra sings pleasantly, and Brando and Simmons are ingratiatingly uneasy when they burst into song and dance, but the movie is extended and rather tedious. The Broadway version is legendary; the movie provides no clue as to why. With Vivian Blaine, Stubby Kaye, Sheldon Leonard, and the Goldwyn Girls.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; March 23.)

If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium (1969)—Said to be the first cartoon caption ever made into a full-length movie. Suzanne Pleshette and Mildred Natwick are among the stereotyped American tourists; Ian McShane is their guide. The director, Mel Stuart, keeps everything moving cheerfully, and there are a few passable one-liners, but you feel as if you've seen the picture before—on television. The script is by David Shaw; with Peggy Cass, Marty Ingels, Murray Hamilton, and Norman Fell.—P.K. (A Different Light Bookstore; March 24.)

The Mouse That Roared (1959)—This is the English comedy in which Peter Sellers—playing a field marshal, an imposingly big-bosomed grand duchess, and the prime minister of Grand Fenwick—made his first big impression on American moviegoers. It's about a minuscule mythical country that declares war on the United States, expecting to be quickly defeated and thus eligible for the cash benefits of rehabilitation. Twenty Grand Fenwickians, dressed in armor and toting bows and arrows, set sail for New York in a ramshackle tug. That's about as far as the comedy gets. The film abandons its small, amusing idea and goes off on a wearying tangent about a scientist (David Kossoff) with a big bomb and an ingénue daughter (Jean Seberg), but it was hugely and inexplicably popular. Leo McKern and William Hartnell are in the cast. Jack Arnold directed.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; through March 21.)

Mark Rylance in "Institute Benjamenta."

TIM BOWER

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films starring Jean Seberg. Through March 21: "Saint Joan" (1957, Otto Preminger) and "The Mouse That Roared" (†). . . . March 22-24: "Bonjour Tristesse" (1958, Preminger). . . . March 25: "Paint Your Wagon" (1969, Josh Logan). . . . March 26: "Birds in Peru" (1968, Romain Gary) and "Moment to Moment" (1966, Mervyn LeRoy).

New Directors/New Films—The first programs in a sixteen-day festival of international films. March 22 at 6 and March 24 at 3:30: "Welcome to the Dollhouse" (Todd Solondz; United States). . . . March 22 at 9 and March 23 at 12:30: "Bye Bye" (Karim Dridi; France, Switzerland, and Belgium). . . . March 23 at 3 and March 24 at 6: "Heartbreak Island" (Hsu Hsiao Ming; Taiwan). . . . March 23 at 6 and March 24 at 9: "Wild Horses" (Marcelo Pineyro; Argentina). . . . March 23 at 9 and March 24 at 1: "Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day" (Christopher Munch; United States). . . . March 26 at 6: "Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky; United States). . . . March 26 at 9:15: "Maborosi" (Hirokazu Kore-eda; Japan). (Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatre, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 875-5610.)

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—March 21 at 2:30: "Late Spring" (1949, Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese). . . . March 21 at 6: "Tokyo Story" (1953, Ozu; in Japanese). . . . March 21 at 6: "Fantômas, Parts 4 and 5" (1913-14, Louis Feuillade; silent, with French intertitles).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of recent French films; all in French, with English subtitles. March 20 at 2 and 6:15 and March 21 at 4:15: "Au Petit Marguery" (Laurent Bénégui). . . . March 20 at 4 and 8 and March 21 at 2: "Don't Forget You Are Going to Die" (Xavier Beauvois). . . . March 21 at 9: "Haut Bas Fragile" (Jacques Rivette). . . . March 22 at 2 and 6:15 and March 23 at 6: "Fresh Bait" (Bertrand Tavernier). . . . March 22 at 4:15 and 9 and March 24 at 9:30: "Something Fishy" (Tonie Marshall). . . . March 23 at 4 and 8:45 and March 26 at 2: "L'Année Juliette" (Philippe Le Guay). . . . March 24 at 7:45: "Muriel Upsets Her Parents" (Philippe Faucon). . . . March 26 at 4: "The Favorite Son" (Nicole Garcia). . . . ¶ March 21 at 6:30: "Camp Stories" (1995, Herbert Beigel). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. March 23-24 at 2: "The Gumball Rally" (1976, Chuck Bail).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films. On March 24 at 7, the feature will be "If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium" (†).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—March 26 at 7: "Blade Runner" (1982, Ridley Scott). . . . March 26 at 9:15: "Alphaville" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—A program of films from Morocco. March 20 at noon and 4:30: "An American in Tangiers" (1994, Mohamed Uland-Mohand; in French, English, Arabic, and Spanish) and "Paul Bowles: The Complete Outsider" (1993, Catherine Warnow and Regina Weinreich). . . . March 20 at 2: "Trances" (1981, Ahmed El Maanouni; in Arabic). . . . March 20 at 8:30: "Return to Oulad Moumen" (1994, Izza Genini). . . . March 20 at 9:30: "Boujad: A Nest in the Heat" (1992, Hakim A. Belabbes). . . . ¶ March 26 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Children of Lumière," clips from three hundred French films made over the past one hundred years.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Films starring Marlon Brando. March 23 at 2: "On the Waterfront" (1954, Elia Kazan). . . . March 23 at 4: "Guys and Dolls" (†). . . . March 24 at 2: "The Fugitive Kind" (†). . . . March 24 at 4:30: "Sayonara" (1957, Josh Logan).

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of films from Latin America. March 22 at 7 and March 23 at 2: "I, the Worst of All" (1990, Maria Luisa Bemberg; an Argentine film, in Spanish).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.—March 20-22 and March 25-26 at 4 and 7 and March 23-24 at 1, 4, and 7: Short films by students of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. (For information, call 998-1795.)

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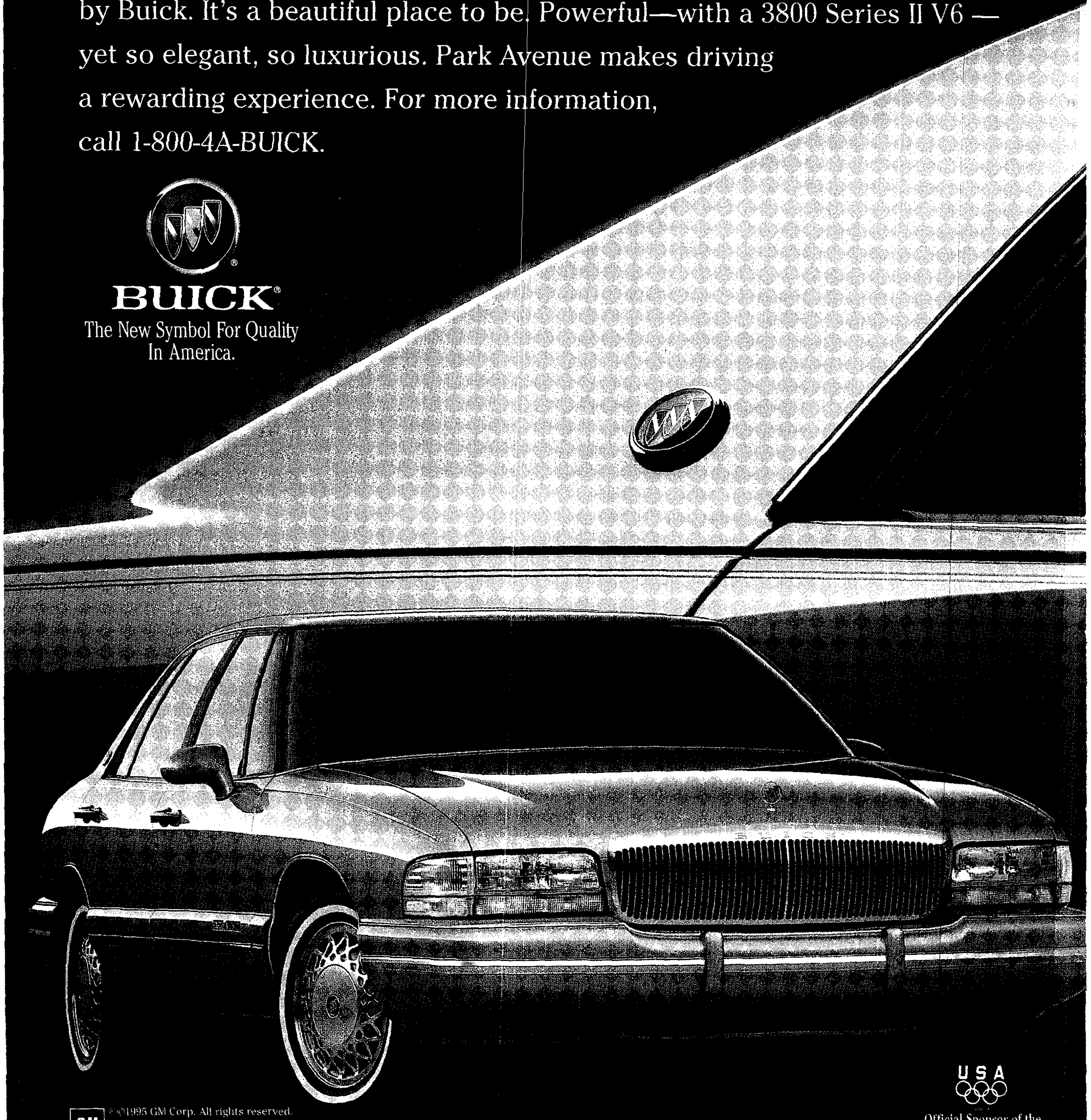

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

AFTERWORD: TWO WRITERS' LEGACIES

“HENRY always regretted burning his writings,” the critic Morris Dickstein said the other night at the Museum of the City of New York. The occasion was a tribute to the late Henry Roth, whose sixty-year bout of writer's block was as legendary as his greatest literary achievement, the 1934 novel “Call It Sleep.” The novel, published when Roth was twenty-eight, was rescued from obscurity thirty years later and went on to sell a million copies in paperback. Another thirty years passed before Roth produced a second work—the series “Mercy of a Rude Stream,” which he wrote in his eighties. Surrounded by photographs of the Lower East Side settings of “Call It Sleep,” from the new Arion Press limited edition, Dickstein recounted the often told story of how in the late forties Roth had built a bonfire on his Maine farm and burned his journals and manuscripts, including a novel he had been writing for the editor Maxwell Perkins.

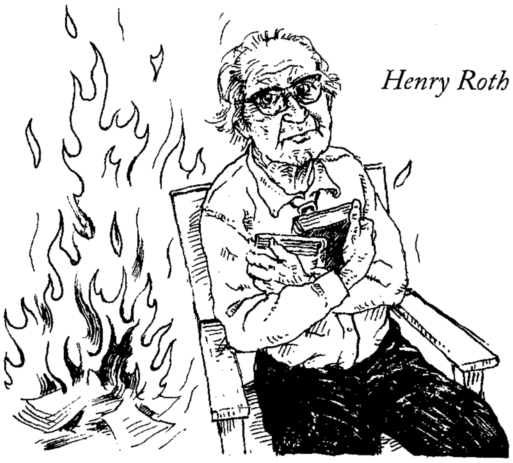
As soon as Dickstein finished his account, Larry Fox, Roth's literary executor, who was in the audience, stood up. “I hadn't planned to make an announcement until later,” he said. “But I couldn't let this audience listen to the story of the bonfire again.” Fox said that he had returned three days earlier from Roth's home in Albuquerque, where he saw work that was thought to have been burned or lost. Fox described seventy-five file folders containing approximately thirty-five hundred pages and including journals from the thirties onward, finished stories, letters, and sketches. “Henry never stopped writing,” Fox went on. “This we now know.”

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

Felicia Jean Steele, Roth's secretary for several years, believes it's likely that the cache includes, among much else, a chronicle of Roth's meeting with Margaret Mead in 1970. Robert Weil, his editor at St. Martin's, said that he had seen only material written after 1979, but, he added, “I wouldn't be surprised by anything that's found.” So the Roth legend is apparently due for yet another revision: from being a writer famous for giving up writing to one famous for having resumed writing, Roth may finally be remembered for having written all his life.

•

THE memorial service for the Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky held earlier this month at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine was as he would have liked it: utterly lacking in cant and phony charm. “I think how meaningless everything is,” Brodsky once said, “except for two or three things—writing itself, listening to music, perhaps a little bit of thinking. But the rest . . .” Accordingly, there were no speeches, no bar-stool monologues about the departed. Instead, Brodsky's astonishing range of friends—Mikhail Baryshnikov, Derek Walcott, Tomas Venclova, Anthony Hecht, Seamus Heaney, Yevgeny Rein, Mark Strand, and many others—took turns reading from his poetry, in Russian and in English. There were also prayers, psalms sung by a choir, a pianist playing Mozart, a string quartet playing Haydn, and poems from Osip Mandelstam, Akhmatova, Frost, and Auden.


Henry Roth

There was an exquisite formality to the service, with no false notes. How could there be? After so many memorial services whose focus is the ego of the living, this occasion revelled in the achievements—the *language*—of the dead.

> Death will come and will find
> a body whose silent peace
> will reflect death's approach
> like any woman's face.

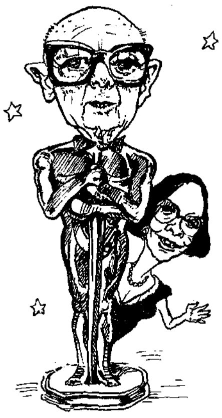
At the end of the service, everyone lit candles, and, with the lights now low, another voice was heard—but this time there was no one at the microphone. It was Brodsky reading—a tape—and his voice, pinched and musical, was as Nadezhda Mandelstam had long ago described it: “a remarkable thing.” With that, people blew out their candles, put on their coats, and headed into a stinging, dark wind. Some stayed behind, staring into the hollows of the cathedral, going nowhere, listening to that voice still ringing.

CREATING A JOURNALISTIC UTOPIA

FIVE days before the New Hampshire primary, on February 15th, the most important event in that twenty-four-hour news cycle took place in the John Peter Zenger Room of the National Press Club, in Washington. Far from Manchester, dozens of reporters crowded to-

IRVING AND MARY'S

"WE don't go for strangers in Hollywood," Cecilia Brady says in "The Last Tycoon," and Irving and Mary Lazar's annual Academy Awards party was proof of that maxim. For all the publicity the party garnered, the press never really got it. An example: it was invariably referred to as "Swifty Lazar's party," but people in the industry always said they were going to "Irving and Mary's," a subtlety Cecilia Brady would have understood. In the early part of the evening, before the stars descended on Spago from the awards ceremony, it was more like a family wedding than like a party—proof to the regulars that they had survived another year in that small town they called "the community." Once you were on Irving and Mary's list, it was rare to be dropped; a spot of unfortunate luck—a nasty divorce, say, or some unpleasantness with the U.S. Attorney or the I.R.S., or even a series of flops—was not reason enough for Irving and Mary to give you the chop.



My wife and I had been on the Lazars' list since the late seventies, I believe because of Mary's intercession. She would talk to me about the Catholic Church, especially about her brother, a priest. In those days, the party was held at the Bistro Garden, in Beverly Hills, and was more raucously informal. In the early eighties, Irving decreed black tie and shifted the party to Spago; he opened up the guest list as well, to friends from New York and Europe. Woe to the guest who tried to bring a child or an uninvited lover without checking: parent and child, invitee and lover were shown the door. Jack and Felicia Lemmon were regulars, and Walter and Carol Matthau, and Jimmy and Gloria Stewart; Clint Eastwood was a fixture, and the better producers and directors of the older generation. The party featured what I came to call Hollywood seating: husbands and wives at the same table, often next to each other—a *placement* I have never comprehended.

At Spago, Irving became a martinet, railing against table-hopping and the switching of place cards, an offense that would get the offender dropped from the list. Each table had a plastic Oscar as its centerpiece, and there were a dozen or so television monitors tuned to the ceremony. The fun was the dish: Walter Matthau speaking almost exclusively in Yiddish to the very grand wife of a New York investment banker—his way of invoking Cecilia Brady—or the woman executive whispering in my ear when Anthony Franciosa appeared onscreen, "He was my second celebrity fuck."

Many of the older stars would depart after the telecast, and the stars from the ceremony would appear, some of whom Irving would let in, others he would not—as gatekeeper, he was extraordinarily capricious. This was the part of the festivities seen on the next day's television shows and in the gossip press, but it was not as much fun as earlier in the evening, not a family party anymore, just another Hollywood blowout. The more presentable press also gained late entry, acting for all the world as if they were members of the community. The last time we went to the party was in 1992, eight months before it was discovered that Mary had the rampaging cancer that would kill her. (Irving died in 1993.) I remember Siskel and Ebert late that evening, at the corner window table overlooking the Sunset Strip, greeting and being greeted, with that extravagance of word and gesture affected by public people who know they are the object of attention. What they did not know was that they were seated in places recently vacated by Jim and Gloria Stewart, real stars.

—JOHN GREGORY DUNNE

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gether not to hear from any of the candidates, or even their handlers, but to listen to a former TV-news producer, Charles Lewis, who is the executive director of the Center for Public Integrity. When Lewis unveiled the center's latest report, entitled "Under the Influence: The 1996 Presidential Candidates and Their Campaign Advisers," one inflammatory item contained within it was instantly put on the Associated Press wire under the headline "URGENT."

Among the findings was the previously reported but subsequently forgotten fact that Larry Pratt, the head of Gun Owners of America, was present at meetings attended by leaders of the Aryan Nations, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Christian Identity Movement. The center's contribution was to point out that Pratt was also a national co-chairman of the Buchanan campaign. Within hours of the news conference, Pratt announced that he was taking a leave of absence from the campaign in order to clear his name. When Lewis returned to the center's I Street office, he discovered more than forty requests for interviews on his voice mail. "It was a complete zoo," he says, and quickly adds, "I'm not *complaining*."

LEWIS came up with the idea for the Center for Public Integrity in 1989, during a long, ruminative pool game with Alejandro Benes, now the center's managing director. "I was basically frustrated," says the forty-two-year-old Lewis, who was then a producer at "60 Minutes," and who resembles the mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent. "I felt that the press had arrived on the scene late in a spate of scandals—Iran-Contra, the savings-and-loan scandal. What if we were unfettered by time and space? What if you had your own journalistic utopia? It seemed like a quaint idea." Benes, a wry, forty-year-old Havana-born cigar connoisseur who was the ABC bureau chief in Central America in the mid-nineteen-eighties, adds, "The question was how to do investigative journalism and not deal with corporate politics. You have to self-publish. You have to do it nonprofit."

The center's breakout moment came two months ago, when it published a book, "The Buying of the President," which chronicled the role that money plays in the relations between candidates and the people who court them. The book

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has become an essential reference work for reporters covering the race. Shortly after its publication, PBS broadcast a ninety-minute "Frontline" special, and ABC News aired a two-day feature on money and the Presidential race.

Benes points out that the furor about Larry Pratt may have caused other facts in the report to be neglected. For example, another co-chairman of the foreign-bashing Buchanan campaign, Richard V. Allen, who was President Reagan's first national-security adviser, has been registered several times as a foreign agent, most recently in 1991. Much of the reporting on the family fortunes of Bob Dole and Lamar Alexander and on their links to special interests has arisen from the center's research. "We are continuing to update the Presidential campaign," says Benes, who promises a report on "the way some members of the campaigns have personally benefitted financially from fund-raising. Stay tuned. There will be more revelations and connections that you wouldn't imagine."

LOVE

Love is an apple, round and firm,
without a blemish or a worm.
Bite into it and you will find
you've found your heart and lost
your mind.

—BROOKE ASTOR

BOERUM HILL'S BIG MAC ATTACK

IT'S twelve-thirty on a Friday afternoon—lunchtime—in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn. Two Department of Transportation dump trucks are standing under the light at Third Avenue and Atlantic, waiting to make an illegal left turn (and who's to stop them?). A bus, several cars, and another truck are lined up behind them, honking. Depending on whether you're Marsha Meyers, proud resident of the Ex-Lax Building, down the street, or an executive of McDonald's, which proposes to build a twenty-four-hour drive-through restaurant here, traffic is either a nightmare or a bonanza.

"Right now, we are in gridlock!" Meyers shouts. A tiny redhead wearing a faux-tiger-skin jacket, she might be referring to traffic or to the battle at hand. Late last year, lawyers for McDonald's went before the Board of Standards and Appeals to request a variance from the Special Atlantic Avenue District zoning regulations. Among other things, McDonald's wants curb cuts on Atlantic and Pacific, so that the golden arches might span the continent in the space of a single block. Local residents, led by Joseph Mohbat, a lawyer, are trying to block the variance, on the ground that theirs is a distinctly urban neighborhood, in which a suburban-style drive-through would be out of character.

"The neighborhood is a gem, but it has an image problem," Meyers says. "It is not viewed as residential." In fact, just off Atlantic Avenue are some thirty-five blocks of restored Civil War-era houses—Italianate, Greek Revival, early Victorian. On Atlantic itself, which is zoned commercial, merchants, some of whom live above their storefronts, conform to what Meyers calls "the Atlantic Avenue aesthetic." Meyers's building has a pale-aqua entranceway and a vaulted marble lobby so grand as to be almost ecclesiastical. (Meyers insists that in Boerum Hill, at least, Ex-Lax has lost all connotations of "the Chocolated Laxative.")

"This is what showed me that their heart is not in the right place," she says. "I know there are customized McDonald's. I understand there's a McDonald's in New Orleans that's wonderful-looking. If they wanted to take on a look that would be like the Victorian storefronts—But they wouldn't even come in without the drive-through."

Taking a new tactic, members of the Boerum Hill Association looked into city records as far back as 1912, when there was a stable on the property, and found that subsequently the stable was converted into a garage. They found records of gas pumps and grease pits and underground storage tanks for gas and oil. They found no evidence, however, that such tanks were ever removed, so they informed the Board of Standards and Appeals that the property might be contaminated.

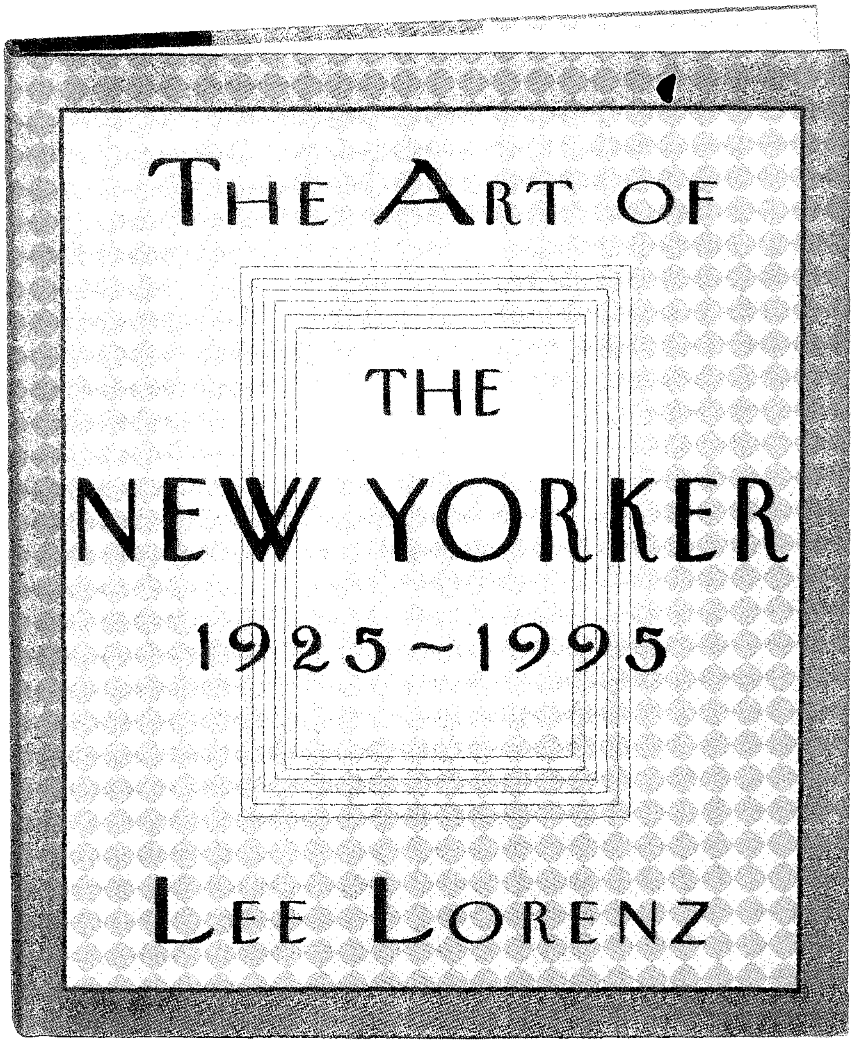
The residents of Boerum Hill know they are fighting an uphill battle. Everything they do to discourage the burger giant seems to make it drool the more. The McDonald's people are not even fazed by the possible presence of underground tanks. Perhaps to them it seems only natural that a McDonald's should spring up on the site of a former grease pit.

PIG-OUT

IN this the year of "Babe," it might seem that the only fitting number to open next Monday's Academy Awards would involve piglets, but Quincy Jones, the producer of the broadcast, insists that no livestock will grace the stage of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Here in New York, the producers of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "State Fair," which begins previews this week at the Music Box, are also opting out of an authentic porker portrayal. The show's swine salute, "More Than Just a Friend" (subtitled "Sweet Hog of Mine"), is sung not to a well-fed prize-winning boar but to an imaginary one. All this prompts the question: Is the real thing so unmanageable onstage?

Not according to the experts. "Having a pig backstage is no different from having a dog. Pigs just need an area where they can feel secure," says Bill Berloni, a theatrical animal trainer who worked with the terrier Sandy in "Annie" and who tried to interest "State Fair" 's producers in a live pig. Warren Eckstein, a local animal behaviorist who once had a twelve-hundred-pound music-loving pet pig named Spotty, also attests to the animals' onstage suitability—"as long as they have proper socializing and exposure, and providing the flooring is comfortable." Brian Kilcommons, an author and animal-behavior specialist who teaches at Tufts, adds that pigs are smarter than run-of-the-mill show-biz animals—dogs—but that for stage work you can't use just any pig. "Females are easier to work with," he says. Kilcommons maintains that a "Babe"-type piglet would be optimal. "I just can't see a full-grown sow in estrus on Broadway. It would be somewhat daunting to the front row." ♦

"Afterword: Two Writers' Legacies," Diana Ketcham, David Remnick; "Creating a Journalistic Utopia," Sidney Blumenthal; "Boerum Hill's Big Mac Attack," M. J. Norris; "Pig-Out," Starla Smith.



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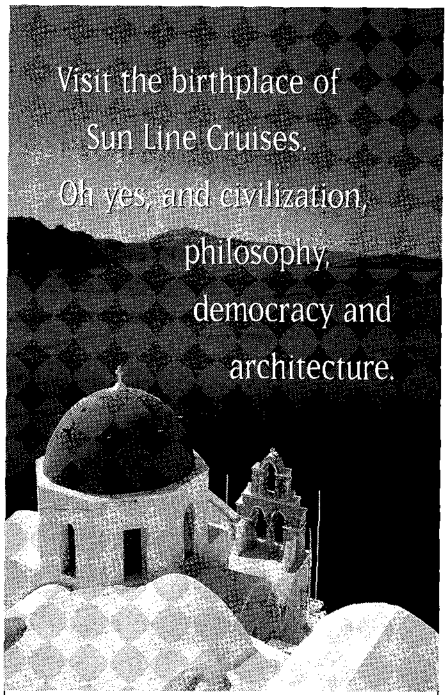

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

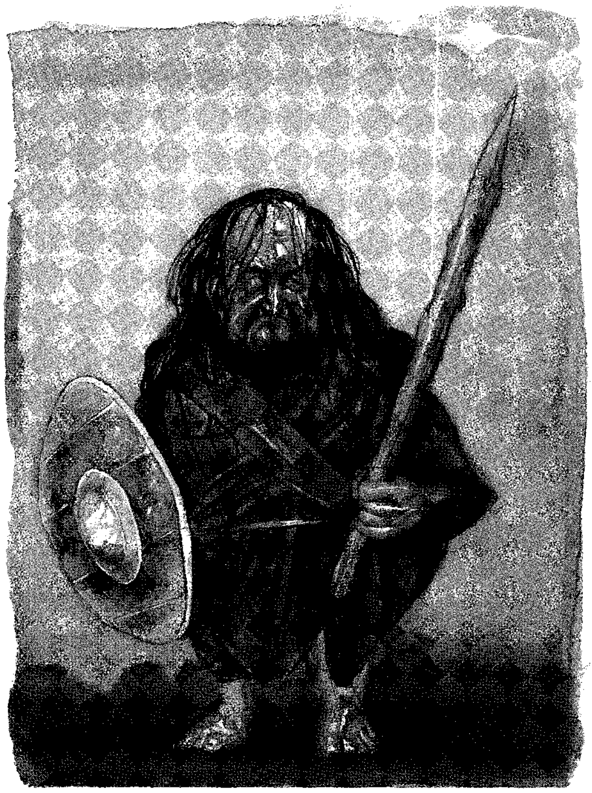
PITCHFORK REBELLION

Where will Pat Buchanan inflict his greatest damage?

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

PEASANT revolts tend to end in tragedy. In a recent popular depiction of such an uprising, "Braveheart," Mel Gibson's cinematic version of the Scottish rebellion against English oppression, the hero summons the peasants to paint their faces, sharpen their sticks, and run screaming into battle. After defeat at the hands of an overwhelming army, their leader, shouting "Freedom!," is graphically drawn and quartered in a public square. "Braveheart" is Patrick J. Buchanan's favorite movie.

Ever since his victory in the Louisiana caucuses, on February 6th, Buchanan has been in a dreamlike state in which he seems unaffected by defeat. Whatever the actual outcome of a primary, he behaves as though it were a victory. His reveries are marked by an explosion of delirious metaphor about "order crashing down," the sound of guns, and the joy of inflicting pain on President Clinton. Sometimes, Buchanan laughs dozens of times during his speeches, interrupting the punch lines his audiences react to like Stones fans hearing the opening bars of "Satisfaction." And—although his period of grace lasted only until his defeat in Arizona, on February 27th—his laughter has scarcely faded. I spoke with Buchanan late last month, after his appearance before a fairly sparse crowd at the gargantuan Evangel Cathedral in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he was already arranging the scenery for the San Diego Convention. "You are one happy warrior," I said. "I sure am," he replied, adding, "Bob Dole won't even sign the pledge on right-to-life. He won't talk about a constitutional amendment! He talks about Colin Powell. That's what I'm going to do. . . . We're going to win this Convention." He laughed. "We wrote the platform last time. We had eighteen delegates." He laughed. "It's going to be our Convention."



The right is suffering from disorientation at the startling sight and sound of its ancient self.

STEVE BRODNER

Buchanan's notion of the Convention appears to reflect his nostalgia for the 1992 gathering in Houston, for which he set the tone in his prime-time address on opening night, with his call for "religious war" and "cultural war." Perhaps partly because his mind is fixed on his big speech at the G.O.P. Convention in San Diego this August, Buchanan has yet to reflect on what he has already accomplished in the course of his candidacy: he has precipitated a fundamental realignment of the conservative movement.

As a result of Buchanan's candidacy, the right, which only a year ago was supremely confident, is suffering from disorientation at the startling sight and sound of its ancient self—the reëmergence of the old right of the nineteen-thirties, in the guise of fin-de-siècle eschatology. Buchanan's "message"—social nationalism, one might call it—has deep roots, which have nourished Buchanan from the dawning of his political consciousness, in a household whose gods were Francisco Franco and Joseph McCarthy. True, he rails against standard right-wing targets, such as the Department of Education and Joycelyn Elders, but he also uses his speeches to explain the subversion of "sovereignty" by a nefarious world government and to promise to "restore the constitutional republic." The optimistic spiel of the high-flying free-marketer is foreign to him. His campaign has been absent of routine praise for what Ronald Reagan used to call "the magic of the marketplace." Buchanan explains compellingly and darkly to those who live in fear of downsizing that their suffering is planned by an international conspiracy, which is gaining control of the global market, and in its scheme giving the United States a subordinate role. Resisting the New World Order, he tells them, is nothing less than a patriotic act of economic survivalism.

THE realignment of the conservative movement had its beginnings last year, when right-wing activists started choosing up sides for the campaign. Buchanan was not at the top of most of their lists. Most believed that Senator Phil Gramm, of Texas, would wind up being the conservative standard-bearer against the establishment icon, Bob Dole. "The big overlooked story is about how the fracture began, how Phil Gramm handled it," Marc Nuttle, who was Pat Robertson's campaign manager in 1988, told me recently.

In 1995, Gramm attempted to assert himself as the preëminent conservative candidate. "I have the most reliable friend you can have in American politics . . . ready money," he told a crowd at a fund-raiser—the only memorable line of his doomed campaign. Money, he believed, constituted the ultimate means of measuring a candidate's political testosterone, and by the end of September of last year he had taken in over nineteen million dollars. Gramm is a turncoat Democrat, a Reaganite supply-sider, an outspoken Gingrichite, and also a former economics professor. When the social-conservative leaders Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, and James Dobson, of Focus on the Family, paid him a visit in March, 1995, he scoffed at their advice not to emphasize laissez-faire economics over their social agenda. "I ain't running for preacher," he said, according to Bauer. Gramm believed, in any case, that the most potent force on the right was the National Rifle Association. One of his top aides was put on its payroll, and the N.R.A. became his unofficial backer.

"The Christians began looking for somebody else," Nuttle said to me. "It didn't look like Buchanan was the person. Alan Keyes got a lot of play on Dobson's radio network, but he didn't have the money or staff to follow up." At that point, the Christian Coalition—the group founded by Pat Robertson after his 1988 campaign—edged close to the candidate who needed it most: the front-runner, Bob Dole. The Christian Coalition's director, Ralph Reed, who is a former Republican National Committee staffer and styles himself a "Christian Lee Atwater," saw in the Dole campaign the prospect of becoming a national party boss. "Ralph's trying to build a political organization," Nuttle said. "How do you take the next step?"

To Dole, a campaign is like a legislative deal: in his lurches to the right, such as his attack on Hollywood, he was not displaying visceral right-wing populism; he was acting as an establishment figure catering to a group whose support he wanted. Dole's old-fashioned politics neatly served Reed's ambition. A political consultant who is an adviser for the Dole campaign and is close to Reed explained, "The deal for the Christian Coalition is that it's useless to have someone who would eclipse them as a force. The reason they're so supportive of Dole is not his positions. With a guy like him, they have some juice. He needs them. They're in a struggle with Buchanan. He has a claim on their constituency. By helping Pat, they would have diminished themselves. Ralph understands this incredibly well. . . . Reed's tightrope to walk is that the core vote might revolt. That's the fear. If Buchanan gets a wind under his sails, then

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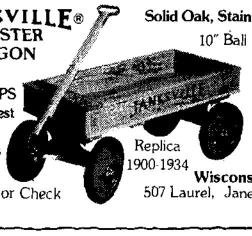

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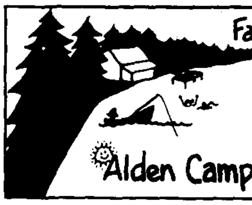

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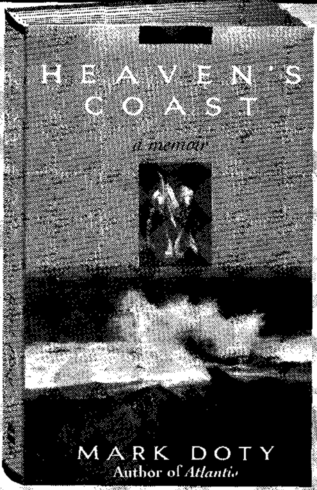

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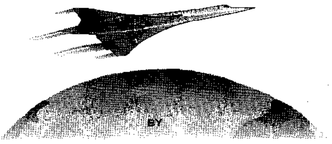

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THOUGHTFUL GIFTS NEED A STORY

I bet he'll cut off the Christian Coalition at the knees."

"Ralph has always assumed Dole was inevitable," said Grover Norquist, a conservative activist who is the president of Americans for Tax Reform and part of House Speaker Newt Gingrich's inner circle. "I went to him and said, 'Let's talk about Forbes, see if he's acceptable,' " Norquist recalled about Reed. "He said, 'Why? Dole is going to win. Let's focus on other things.' "

The Christian Coalition, because it has a tax-exempt status, could not formally endorse anyone. But many of its leaders in Iowa and South Carolina—states where it established some of its strongest chapters—suddenly emerged as Dole champions. "The powers that be in the Christian Coalition generally support Dole," observed Phyllis Schlafly, who first gained prominence in the Goldwater campaign, and is now the president of the Eagle Forum, and is a Buchanan supporter. "But there's a difference between leaders and members."

Within the conservative movement, Reed began to be seen as an appendage not only of the Republican establishment, which supports Dole, but as a friend of the neoconservatives—those former liberals and leftists who turned right in the late nineteen-sixties. "Pat's strategy all along from '93 was the expectation that he was not going to get the endorsement of the leadership of groups like the Christian Coalition, but a grassroots following," said Sam Francis, a former editorial page editor for the Washington *Times* and a friend of Buchanan's. "I regard Ralph Reed as a neocon," Francis added, applying the worst label he could imagine. And, in fact, Reed is a friend of prominent neoconservatives, including William Kristol, the publisher of *The Weekly Standard*. Last year, Kristol's father, Irving, known as the "godfather of neoconservatism," took Reed to an editorial meeting of *The Public Interest*, a neoconservative intellectual quarterly that the elder Kristol had founded.

Buchanan's campaign was helped by the rivalry between Gramm and Dole, which had been playing itself out in the Senate. Gramm started the game by getting Louisiana to schedule a caucus vote before the February 12th Iowa caucuses, but that strategy turned out to be his undoing. Dole's forces backed Buchanan, who won with the help of the social-conservative vote. Then, in Iowa, the strategy nearly became Dole's downfall, for Buchanan came in a close second by winning the vast majority of the social conservatives. (If Keyes had not been in the race, it is likely that Buchanan would have won Iowa.) The Christian Coalition leaders evangelizing for Dole, it turned out, could generate everything but spirit.

Buchanan's campaign also benefitted from, and further exposed, the failure of Newt Gingrich and his House agenda—the Contract with America. A year ago, with Gingrich at the helm, the Republicans believed they were poised for a voyage on the U.S.S. Enterprise. During the primaries, Buchanan derided Gingrich on the stump. "Mr. Newt collaborated," he said. "They're selling out for money. They'll sell your birthright for a mess of porridge. Look how far those surrenders have gone!" In Buchanan's analysis, Gingrich is an appeaser of the New World Order.

"If the Contract had been completely enacted, there would have been an overall positive feeling in the Party," said the Family Research Council's Gary Bauer, who was always skeptical of the economic emphasis of the Gingrich "revolution" and remains uncommitted in the Presidential contest. "That might have made it hard for Pat to mount a serious challenge. Gosh, now you don't even hear anyone talking about the Contract." Bauer remarked in another interview, "I'm past getting irritated at some in my party talking about the efficiency of the marketplace."

By the end of the early primaries, Buchanan had set off an implosion within the conservative movement. On his radio show Rush Limbaugh, who had been brought in by the Heritage Foundation after the 1994 election to lecture the freshman class as part of an orientation program, decried Buchanan's protectionism, just as four years ago he decried Ross Perot's, and tried to uphold "real" conservatism. Former Senator Malcolm Wallop, who later became the co-chairman of Steve Forbes's defunct ultra-supply-side campaign, denounced Buchanan as a "socialist." And William Bennett, who served as Lamar Alexander's co-chairman, actually threatened not to vote for the Republican ticket if Buchanan were nominated.

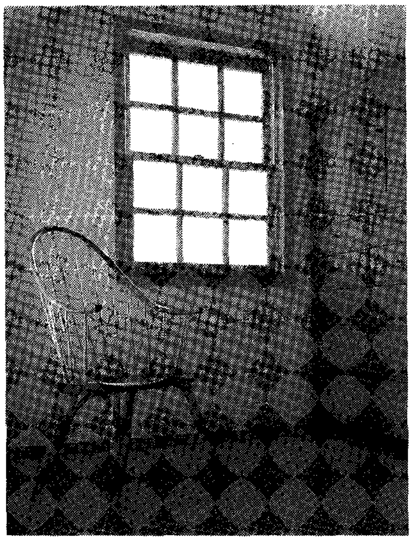
BUCHANAN has been openly making the case for a return to the pre-Second World War right ever since 1990, when he declared his opposition to the Gulf War. "Most of us 'neo-isolationists,' a disparate, contentious lot, are really not 'neo' anything," he wrote that year. "We are old church and old right, anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist, disbelievers in Pax Americana. We love the old republic, and when we hear phrases like 'New World Order,' we release the safety catches on our revolvers." Few took him seriously at the time—except, perhaps, his neoconservative antagonists. Many in Washington simply viewed him as a successful, controversial co-host of CNN's "Crossfire" program and a genial luncheon companion. But two years later the pundit-turned-candidate inflicted severe damage on President Bush.

The old right resurrected by Buchanan at the end of the twentieth century is a little-honored and little-remembered movement. It coalesced in 1936, the year of Franklin D. Roosevelt's landslide against Governor Alf Landon, a Republican from Kansas. In that race, the far right centered on a third party, the Union Party, whose leaders were Gothic prototypes of the far right of today: Father Charles Coughlin, a radio priest with a following in the millions, who combined tirades against international conspiracies (mostly of the Elders of Zion variety) with sympathy for the plight of the worker; Gerald L. K. Smith, a fundamentalist rabble-rouser who had been the deputy of Huey Long's Share Our Wealth populist movement until Long was assassinated, in 1935; and William Lemke, a Midwestern agrarian populist with a penchant for economic panaceas. Their movement was a crusade to reverse the destruction of the true old republic, as they saw it, by the New Deal. With the coming of the Second Republic, the old right evolved into the America First Committee, attracting a heroic spokesman in Charles Lindbergh, who claimed that "the British, the Jewish and the Roosevelt Administration" were dragging the nation into war. Isolationism found respectable leadership in Senator Robert Taft, of Ohio, whose commitment continued after the Second World War in his initial opposition to the formation of NATO and the Marshall Plan.

In the light of the Cold War, however, the old right seemed an anachronism, and it was displaced by such leaders as William F. Buckley, Jr., who in 1955, at the age of thirty, founded *National Review*. Buckley and his associates, some of them ex-Communist intellectuals, sought to give conservatism intellectual force and, later, to purge it of its pitchfork wing. It was Buckley who, during Buchanan's previous attempt to run for President, in 1992, argued that a case could be made that Buchanan qualified as an anti-Semite—and in effect excommunicated him from the conservative movement. The neoconservatives have resumed these battles, explaining in a torrent of articles why they don't embrace Buchanan's ism. Norman Podhoretz, the editor-at-large of *Commentary* magazine, has published in the March issue an article entitled "Neoconservatism: A Eulogy," in which he describes the rise and post-Cold War fall of the neoconservative movement, declares its work done, and foresees an opening for the revival of the old right. "With the Soviet Union gone, and with China not yet a threat, these traditionally isolationist conservatives have begun returning, as it were, to normalcy." In *The Weekly Standard* he recently returned to Buckley's argument that Buchanan must be regarded as an anti-Semite.

Buchanan not only remains undaunted by how he has split the conservatives with his nativism, xenophobia, racialism, and wink-and-nod anti-Semitism but positively revels in the ideological chaos he's fostering. Unlike other Republican candidates, or leaders of the 104th Congress, the self-described "unemployed angry white male" is not running against the idea of government. Demanding a fence along the Rio Grande and the imposition of draconian tariffs presumes, rather, a fairly large government role. Buchanan knows he is not going to gain his Party's nomination, but he remains the exuberant guerrilla of the Kulturkampf, still drawing crowds who have been vastly entertained by his animadversions on the campaign: he appeared with a mechanical parrot (in the role of Dole), calling himself the "Bad Dog," and vowing to fight until Hell freezes over and then to fight "on the ice."

He also managed to squander an opportunity that should have been obvious to someone who has served, as Buchanan has, in the White House speechwriting shop: during the week after his



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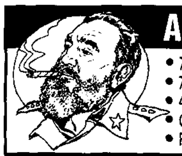

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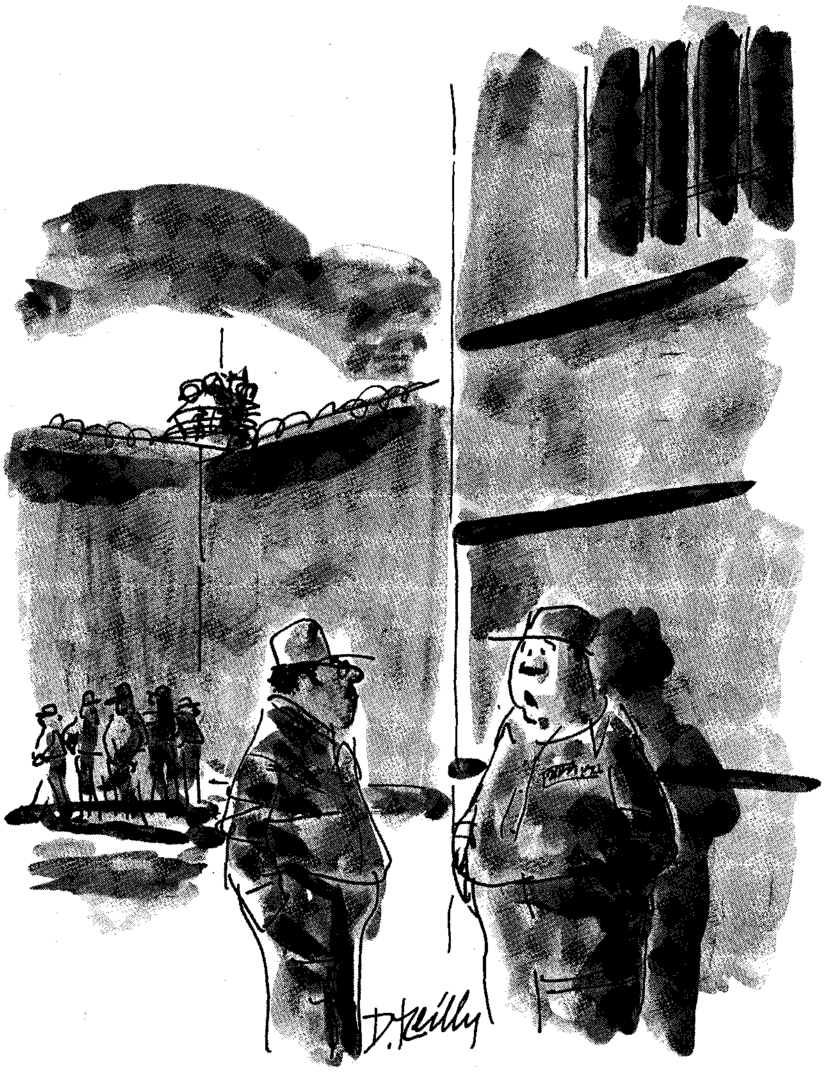

"Who among us is safe if they can put F. Lee Bailey in chains?"

New Hampshire victory, when he had the undivided attention of the press and the public, he failed to deliver a big speech on his "conservatism of the heart." Such a speech, complete with the trimmings—an advance text and, if possible, a university setting—would have given the columnists and op-ed writers something new to chew over, and Buchanan might have created a broader sympathy for his candidacy. Instead, he wore funny hats, hefted firearms over his head, gloated about his triumphs in Alaska, Louisiana, and New Hampshire, and led his adoring crowds in howls of "Lock and load!" In Arizona, where Steve Forbes won on his expensive ad blitz and his laissez-faire economics, Buchanan came up short because of his social conservatism. The West, after all, is the most pro-choice region in the country in the Republican Party, but Buchanan's appeal to Perot voters, attracted by his protectionism, failed to take into account their libertarian social values. Then, in South Carolina, his protectionism gave many social conservatives in an exporting state with heavy foreign investment a reason to vote against him. "Who does he think we are, some backwater jerks down here who don't know about the world economy?" former Governor Carroll Campbell, who supported Dole, said to me later. "He had a little backlash. People in our state have a lot of pride in what's happened. Nobody wants to turn the clock back, no one wants to retreat." In South Carolina, Buchanan appeared in a cold downpour, before hundreds of gray-uniformed cadets huddled at the gates of the Citadel, the military academy fighting the admission of women. Buchanan rattled through his stump speech; he laughed and they cheered. The revolt of "peasants with pitchforks" he had summoned in New Hampshire seemed to have wound up as a children's crusade in Charleston.

Between now and the Convention, the battle for primacy on the right will continue, and will go beyond such issues as school prayer and abortion. The followers of Gingrich in Congress, the neoconservatives, and the traditionalists who support Bob Dole will attempt to explain why they, and not Buchanan, are truly conservative—a task that presents, at the least, a tortuous problem in nomenclature. Barry Goldwater understood the dilemma when Dole went to Arizona to seek his endorsement. In 1964, when Goldwater ran against Lyndon Johnson, many moderates did not endorse him; they acted as though they were the rightful rulers of the Republican Party. (Dole, a fierce partisan, was an unfaltering Goldwater supporter.) But although Goldwater's loss was viewed at the time as a debacle, he transformed the G.O.P.; he made Reagan's ascent and 1980 victory possible by beginning to forge the conservative coalition and by setting forth its themes. In contemplating Buchanan, Goldwater felt more than his great age; he felt the earth move. "We're the new liberals of the Republican Party," Goldwater told Dole.

Dole is currently seeking the higher middle ground of his departed mentor, Richard Nixon, who sustained himself by playing each against all. Within Dole's campaign, the consuming discussion revolves around the question of "whether to mash Buchanan," as one Dole consultant put it, or to "build a door for him to walk through." Dole seems not to know, or care, that Forbes and Buchanan have been more than two men trying to beat him—that they have represented the poles of the Republican Party of a divisive future, and that the unfettered radical capitalism advocated by Forbes is bound to intensify the social nationalism that has been whipped up by Buchanan's race. "This is the last hurrah of the older generation," Buchanan said on the night of Super Tuesday, when he lost every primary. "The last hurrah. And our time is coming, my friends. Our time is coming. I can assure you of that." The 1996 campaign may be a nascent stage of social nationalism, and Buchanan, like Goldwater, may be a forerunner. ♦

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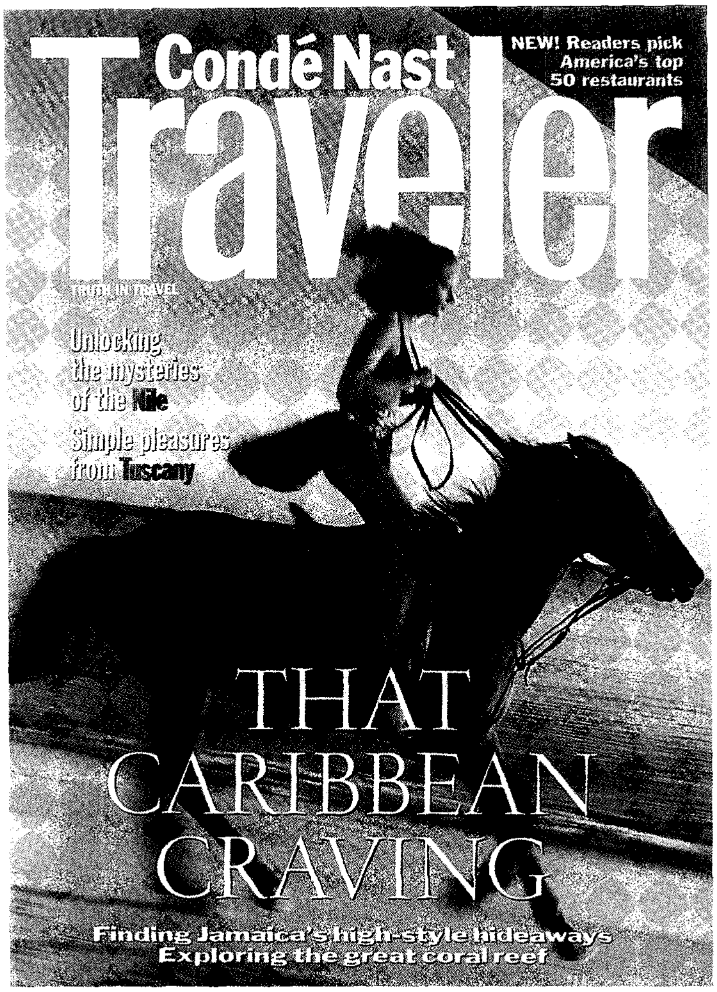

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LIFE AND LETTERS

THE THIRD MAN

Graham Greene loved intrigue, which explains his enduring elusiveness. What's missing from the public portraits? The man the author knew.

BY MICHAEL KORDA

GRAHAM GREENE was a complicated, acerbic, and contradictory man, with a wry sense of humor and a schoolboy's taste for pranks and practical jokes; he loved making a mystery of his life, and he kept the three different aspects of his identity—the writer, the public figure, and the private man—separate and distinct. So I was hardly surprised that the Graham Greene I knew seems to have eluded his two biographers, Norman Sherry and Michael Shelden.

Greene died in 1991. Two years ago, Sherry, a professor at Trinity University, in San Antonio, Texas, published the second installment of his exhaustive three-volume "Life of Graham Greene." (Volume I had appeared in 1989.) A few months later, Shelden, who teaches at Indiana State University, published his revisionist biography, "Graham Greene: The Enemy Within." On the evidence of these books, one might almost think that Greene took malicious pleasure in leading Sherry, his pious official biographer, down the garden path, and that, similarly, if he were still around, the old mischief-maker would have been quietly amused by the way Shelden mistook his habitual secretiveness and prankster spirit for outright villainy.

The Graham Greene I knew best was the third man—the private, off-duty character—and when I met him it was, on my part, love at first sight (or, at any rate, besotted admiration). In the summer of 1950, I was sixteen, a student on holiday from Le Rosey, a Swiss boarding school, and my uncle Alexander Korda, the film producer, had ordered me to Antibes, to join him and some guests for a cruise on his yacht, Elsewhere. Initially, I was overwhelmed by a party of grownups that included the film director Carol Reed; Vivien Leigh; my uncle's mistress and soon-to-be-wife, Alexa Boycun; and a swiftly changing cast of celebrities which included, at various times, Pamela Churchill, David Selznick and his wife, Jennifer Jones, and Marcel Pagnol. To say that I felt ill at ease would be putting it mildly. Since Alex did not much like children, he solved the problem of my presence by treating me as an adult, but I spent my first days on board trying to hide. Then, one day, when I went up on deck before lunch, still attempting to make myself invisible, a tall, lean Englishman (he could have been nothing else), with thinning sandy hair and the most alarmingly penetrating pale-blue, protuberant eyes—rather like intelligent gooseberries, I thought—appeared beside me and handed me a cocktail.

I looked at it suspiciously. My father had encouraged me to drink a glass of wine at dinner, but I did not think he would have approved of a cocktail before lunch. "Drink up," the stranger said. "You look as if you need it."

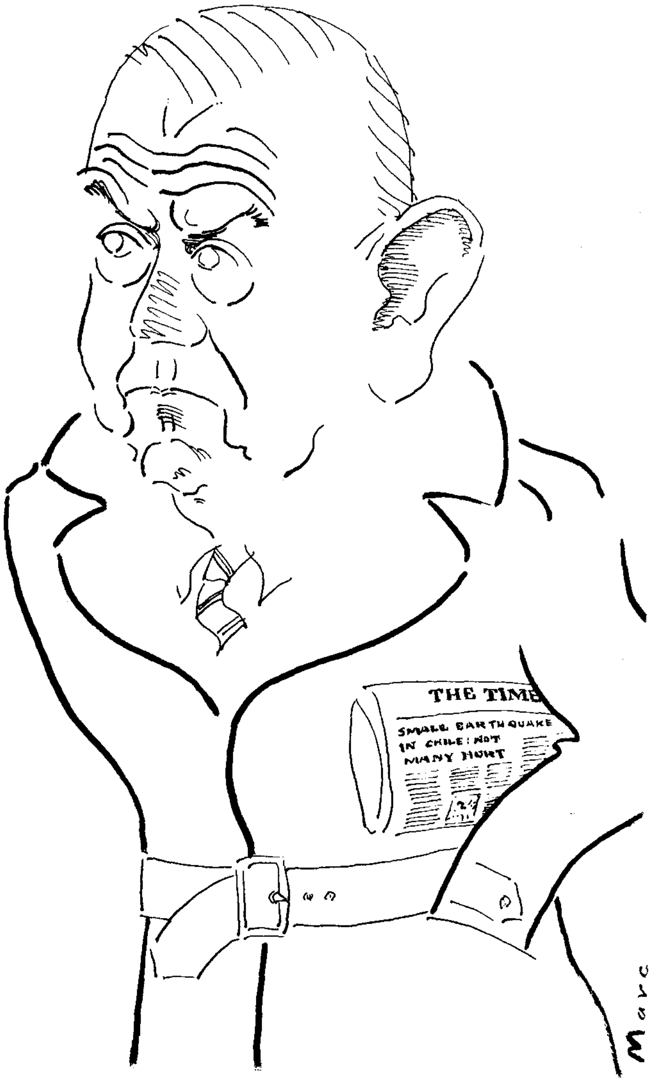
He had a curious way of speaking: very English, clipped, precise to the point of being old-fashioned and high-pitched, with a slight trace of an upper-class stutter—hardly more than an occasional hesitation in the middle of a word—and a tendency to turn every sentence into a question. It was altogether a very donnish voice, as I discovered later, when I studied at Oxford.

I sipped the cocktail cautiously.

"Go on," he said. "It's a Martini. It can do you no possible harm. I'm Graham Greene, by the way."

We shook hands rather formally. Soon enough, however, I realized that Greene, who was then forty-five, had an intuitive sympathy for young people, together with a sly, subversive determination to help them break the rules—qualities that were the result, no doubt, of his unhappy childhood as the son of an English public-school headmaster. I had heard of him, of course. Greene had co-written the screenplay for Carol Reed's recent successful thriller "The

Fallen Idol," based on his own short story, which was about a privileged boy who almost dooms the beloved butler who is his only friend—a perfect example of Greene's view of the danger of innocence—as well as the screenplay for "The Third Man," which had been an enormous hit. My father, Vincent Korda, who had done the art direction for both pictures, had spoken of Greene with great affection.


THE TIMES
SMALL EARTHQUAKE IN CHILE: NOT MANY HURT
Marc

With Greene, it was always difficult to tell where the spy novelist left off and the spy manqué began.

Despite Greene's promise that the Martini would do me no harm, I felt my confidence, such as it was, ebbing with each sip, together with my sense of balance. My lips seemed to have become anesthetized, and I had no idea how I was going to get through a long luncheon with my uncle's guests, all of whom were now on deck and were shouting at one another at the top of their voices about friends whose names meant nothing to me.

"The great advantage of being a writer is that you can *spy* on people," Greene told me as I took another tiny sip of my Martini. "You're there, listening to every word, but part of you is observing. Everything is useful to a writer, you see—every scrap, even the longest and most boring of luncheon parties." (He took his own advice: his various cruises on Alex's yacht became a masterly set piece of ironic comedy in his 1955 novella, "Loser Takes All.")

Finding my voice, I told him that I thought Pamela Churchill, with her mane of red-gold hair, her large bright-blue eyes, and her slim ankles, was one of the most beautiful women I'd ever seen.

Greene stared at her. "Yes," he said thoughtfully. "One can see that it would be possible for a young man to think that." He paused. "But the main thing is to have a lot of women. Then you'll discover that looks aren't even the half of it."

I don't remember what my ambitions had been before that moment, but I decided on the spot that I wanted to be a writer. Any lingering doubts I might have had were dispelled the next morning, when I observed Graham (as he had asked me to call him) at work. An early riser, he appeared on deck at first light, found a seat in the shade of an awning, and took from his pocket a small black leather notebook and a black fountain pen, the top of which he unscrewed carefully. Slowly, word by word, without crossing out anything, and in neat, square handwriting, the letters so tiny and cramped that it looked as if he were attempting to write the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin, Graham wrote, over the next hour or so, exactly five hundred words. He counted each word according to some arcane system of his own, and then screwed the cap back onto his pen, stood up and stretched, and, turning to me, said, "That's it, then. Shall we have breakfast?" I did not, of course, know that he was completing "The End of the Affair," the controversial novel based on his own tormenting love affair, nor did I know that the manuscript would end, typically, with an exact word count (63,162) and the time he finished it (August 19th, 7:55 A.M., aboard Elsewhere).

Greene's self-discipline was such that, no matter what, he always stopped at five hundred words, even if it left him in the middle of a sentence. It was as if he brought to writing the precision of a watchmaker, or perhaps it was that in a life full of moral uncertainties and confusion he simply needed one area in which the rules, even if self-imposed, were absolute. Whatever else was going on, his daily writing, like a religious devotion, was sacred and complete. Once the daily penance of five hundred words was achieved, he put the notebook away and didn't think about it again until the next morning. It seemed to me then the ideal way to live—far better than the routine followed by my father, who worked from dawn until late at night at a studio in London and then brought his work home with him.

That morning, Graham and I had breakfast together at a small dockside café. From time to time, he looked suspiciously at the people passing by, or at the fellow-patrons who sat down and ordered coffee and a croissant. Spies and informers were on his mind. He talked about his wartime espionage experience, and about international politics. With the natural anti-Americanism of an upper-class Englishman, he was suspicious of the motives of the United States in the Cold War and resentful of American assumptions of morality. The F.B.I., he told me, had an ever-expanding dossier on him. He had no doubt that his telephone was tapped and his mail was being monitored. This aura of political persecution made him even more glamorous in my eyes. After breakfast, I stopped at a stationer's and bought a small notebook and a fountain pen.

OVER the next few weeks, my uncle's yachting party, with its ever-changing guest list, slowly sailed eastward along the Riviera and down the Italian coast, anchoring for the night in

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any port where there was a three-star restaurant. Both on the yacht and on shore, I followed Greene everywhere, like a faithful dog, and, as long as I was quiet, he didn't seem to mind being shadowed by a teen-age companion.

Despite the difference in our ages, we became friends. I was the cautious one; it was he who had the spirit of a daring schoolboy. He led, and I followed, fascinated and sometimes aghast. Before we left Antibes, he put me behind the wheel of Alexa Boycun's little Simca sports car and made me his chauffeur, despite the fact that I didn't have a driver's license. In Nice, he took me to see a lavishly furnished brothel, just off the Promenade des Anglais, explaining that this was an aspect of life about which every young man should be educated as early as possible. I began smoking English cigarettes, in imitation of him, and soon got used to a Martini before lunch.

I knew nothing about his private life. If his behavior seemed youthful, sometimes even childish, I was still at an age when I thought of all grownups as old. I was unaware that he no longer lived with his wife, Vivien, or that he had been conducting a long love affair with a married woman, Catherine Walston. Catherine had been unable to leave her husband behind, complaisant though he was, and join Graham for the summer, so Graham, apparently content, visited brothels and flirted gently with Alexa.

Even at the age of sixteen, I could tell that he was attractive to women. He clearly enjoyed their company—a characteristic that was rare in an Englishman of his age and class. He also possessed a feline love of gossip, and he had a forthright, unapologetic interest in sex. Like the great British explorer and erotic adventurer Sir Richard Burton, whom he much admired, Graham was a mine of lore about brothels and gambling dens, and, also like Burton, he did not take a romantic view of women. I may have remained ignorant about his mistress, but with women he made no secret of the fact that he was a Catholic living apart from his wife and involved with a married woman, and in their eyes this gave him a certain daredevil, doomed quality, a sense that he believed in the fires of Hell and was perfectly willing to risk them for, as he put it, "one good fuck." I watched as he easily charmed every woman he met. He had a gift for intimacy, a remarkable ability to draw out women's life stories, and an unfeigned interest in every detail of what they told him. Women could talk to Graham—and did—about all the things that their husbands didn't want to hear about or know about, certain that he would appreciate every word. He was a "man's man" who was equally at ease with the opposite sex. It is not surprising that he is one of the few male English writers of his generation whose women characters are completely convincing.

Having concluded, rightly, that my father was unwilling to discuss the subject of sex with me, Graham assumed the role of adviser. If I wanted to go to bed with a woman, he said, I should ask her directly, and not beat about the bush. "It's usually the best way," he told me.

While I was grateful for his advice, I was hardly in a position to put it into practice. But my education didn't stop there. Graham loved low dives, and in Genoa, where we put in to take on fuel and supplies, he took me to a bar full of sailors in drag. As part of the entertainment, a purser from a cruise ship, wearing a blond wig, a clinging red gown, and a feather boa, did a convincing imitation of Sophie Tucker singing "Some of These Days." Only the five-o'clock shadow under his pancake makeup spoiled the effect.

The cruise was not all pleasure. The "team" of Graham Greene, Carol Reed, and Alexander Korda, having produced two hits, was now trying to come up with a successor to "The Fallen Idol" and "The Third Man." In the afternoons, the three of them would sit on the bridge of the yacht together, trying to come up with another winner. Carol appeared to doze, a yachting cap pulled low over his eyes; Alex, with an old sea dog's grizzled beard, smoked cigars and played solitaire; and Graham, his shirt unbuttoned, smoked cigarettes and suggested ideas in his high-pitched voice.

"The Third Man" had come out of just such a session. One day, Graham had read aloud a few lines he'd written on the back of an envelope: "I had paid my last farewell to Harry a week ago, when his coffin was lowered into the frozen February ground, so that it was with incredulity that I saw him pass by, without a sign of recognition, among the host of strangers in the Strand."

THE APPOINTMENT

Flamingo silk. New ruff,
the ivory ghost
of a halter. Chestnut curls,

commas behind the ear.
"Taller, by half a head,
than my lord Walsingham."

His Devon-cream brogue,
malt eyes. New cloak
mussed in her mud.

The Queen leans forward,
a rosy envelope of civet:
a cleavage

whispering seed pearls.
Her own sleeve
rubs that speck of dirt

on his cheek. Three thousand
ornamental fruit baskets
swing in the smoke.

"It is our pleasure
to have our servant trained
some longer time

in Ireland." Stamp out
marks of the Irish.
Their saffron smocks.

All carroughs, bards,
and rhymers. Desmonds
and Fitzgeralds

stuck on low spikes,
an avenue of heads
to the war tent.

Kerry timber
sold to the Canaries.
Pregnant girls

hung in their own hair
on city walls. Plague
crumpling gargoyles

through Munster. "They spoke
like ghosts crying
out of their graves."

—Ruth Padel

These words were the genesis of "The Third Man," but at the time Graham wrote them he had had no idea what was to come after this beginning. Alex was thrilled with Graham's tantalizing opening, and begged him to finish the story, but he insisted that Graham move the setting from London to the still divided city of Vienna.

Graham wrote the screenplay; Anton Karas was commissioned to compose the film's zither score; Carol Reed eventually cast Orson Welles as Harry Lime; and the move to Vienna resulted in the inspired use of the city's ruins and sewers for the action scenes. Given the tremendous critical and financial success of "The Third Man," it was all the more disappointing that Alex, Graham, and Carol were unable to agree on another project. Alex toyed with the idea of making "War and Peace" with Welles in the role of Pierre Bezukhov, but Graham wasn't interested in writing a screenplay for that. Carol urged them to do Conrad's "An Outcast of the Islands"—in part, I suspect, because after the sewers of Vienna he was eager to do a picture with a tropical setting. Copies of the book were expressed from London, and for a few days all hands, including me, immersed themselves in it, but Graham didn't feel that he could adapt his style to Conrad's. (Alex and Carol eventually did film the Conrad story, without Graham; it had Ralph Richardson, Trevor Howard, and Robert Morley in the lead roles, but it was not a great success, partly because the script, as the critics complained, lacked the crispness and the haunting sense of quiet that were Graham's hallmarks as a screenwriter.)

As the yacht moved from port to port, they lobbed ideas back and forth—the story of Lawrence of Arabia, which Alex then owned and later sold to Sam Spiegel; the sailing adventure "Kon-Tiki," which was about to be published in America; a historical drama about Casanova—but somehow nothing came of them. Graham enjoyed the fame and money that "The Third Man" had brought him, but, unlike Alex and Carol, he had no desire to do the same thing all over again. His mind was already on other matters, and when he left the yacht, without having satisfied his host, it was to go to Malaya and then to Indochina, where the war between the French and the Vietminh was in full

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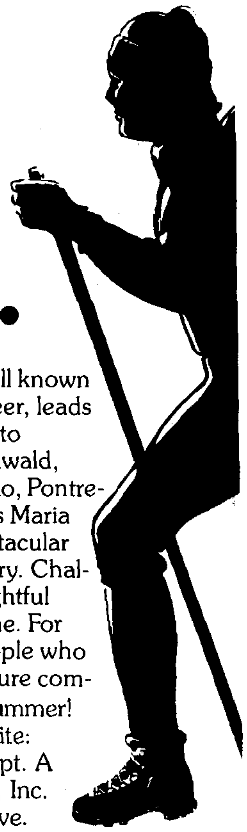

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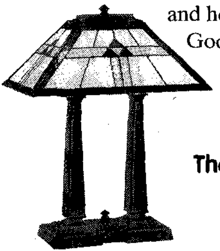

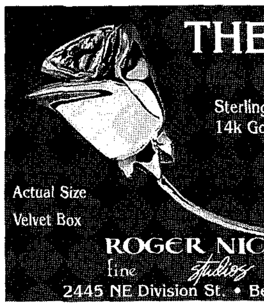

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swing, and where he was to find the inspiration for "The Quiet American." He never wrote another film for Alex, though as the years passed they grew, if anything, fonder of each other.

I CARRIED on an intermittent correspondence with Graham over the next few years, as I graduated from Le Rosey, served in the Royal Air Force, and went to Oxford. Occasionally, I saw him at dinner parties, at Alex's house in London, or on summer cruises on Elsewhere, and he was always full of amiable, if misplaced, advice for me. In 1956, I fought in the anti-Communist revolution in Hungary, where my father and uncles had grown up. Before I left London for Budapest, Graham introduced me to a gentleman from the British intelligence agency MI6, and, just like a character out of one of Graham's own novels, the man recruited me for the less than romantic job of memorizing the shoulder flashes and cap badges of Soviet military units. It was a task that bore a certain resemblance to Graham's wartime duties as a spy in Sierra Leone, where he hunted fruitlessly for Axis agents among the missionaries and remittance men of colonial Africa, and also to the activities of the bogus spy whom Alec Guinness played so memorably in the movie of Graham's "Our Man in Havana."

Three years later, I landed a job as an assistant editor at Simon & Schuster, and the first letter I wrote on company stationery was to Graham. I expressed the hope that someday, perhaps far in the future, I might have the honor of publishing him. He wrote back to say that he hoped so, too, and wished me well, and there the matter rested. I saw him from time to time in London or in the South of France, and he continued to keep up a benign, though distant, interest in my fate.

For many years, Graham's American publisher had been the Viking Press. His books sold well, and there seemed to be no reason to expect that he would move to another house. I was therefore surprised when, one day in late 1971, I received a telephone call from Monica McCall, his American agent. By this time, I had become editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster. Monica came right to the point: Would I like to become Graham Greene's publisher? Of course, I replied. After all, to a publisher Greene represented both commerce and literature; he was that rare thing a serious writer of international stature (he was a perennial candidate for the Nobel Prize) whose books sold in best-seller quantities.

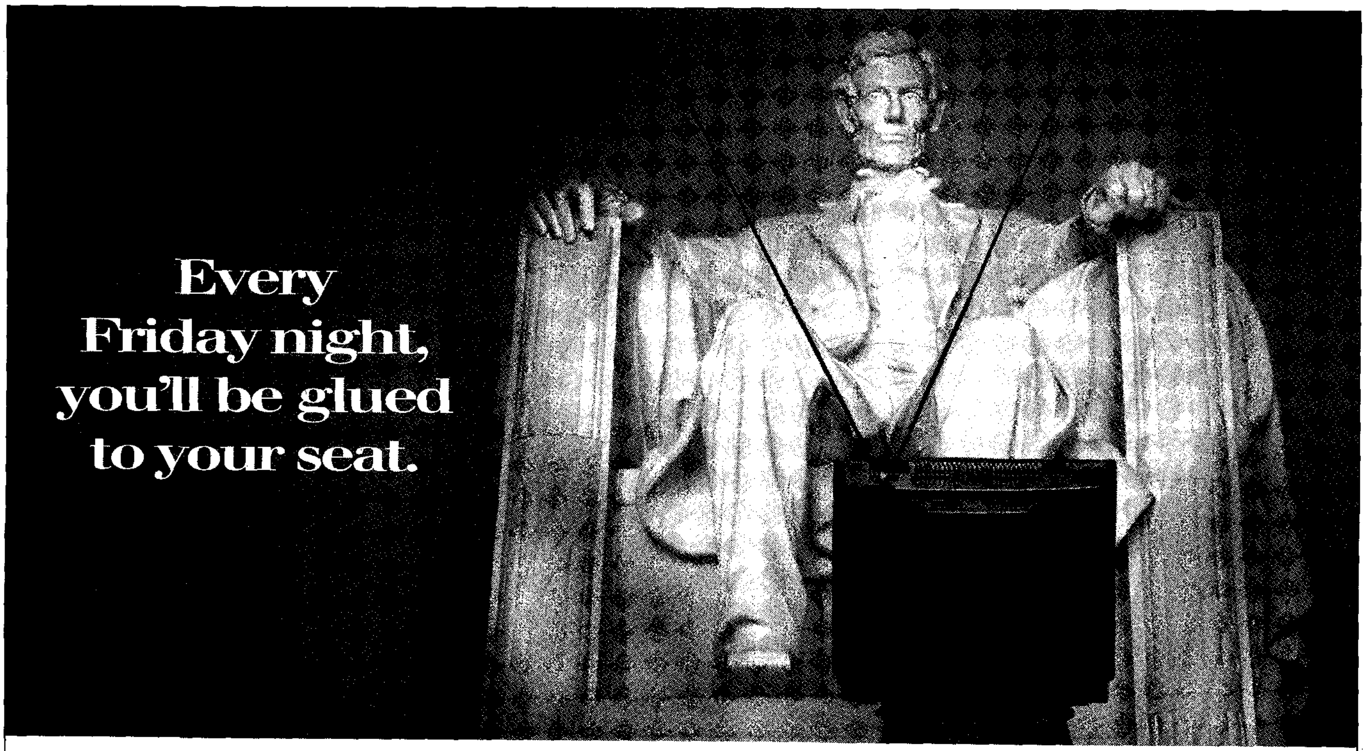
I was ecstatic, but also astonished. Why, I asked, had Graham decided to leave Viking? "It's quite a story," Monica replied. It began after Greene sent Viking the manuscript of his latest novel, "Travels with My Aunt." Viking sent a copy of the manuscript to the Book-of-the-Month Club, but an executive called to say that, while they loved the book, they didn't like the title. Monica told me that Tom Guinzburg, the president of Viking, had decided, on reflection, that he didn't like the title much, either, so he asked Monica to send Graham a cable recommending that he change the title for the American edition. He and the other editors at Viking had meanwhile dreamed up a number of alternative titles. Apparently, Guinzburg had failed to get to know his irascible author sufficiently. Soon afterward, Monica said, she received a terse cable from Paris: "WOULD RATHER CHANGE PUBLISHER THAN TITLE. GRAHAM GREENE."

During the next fourteen years, Graham and I worked together on ten books, and we often saw each other when I was in Europe. Graham had moved to Antibes in 1966, and I dined with him there and in London many times, often in the company of my father. My father was famous for his taciturnity, but Graham, normally the most talkative of men, seemed to enjoy endless dinners with him. The two men would sit facing each other for hours, never saying a word, apparently quite happy with the silent company. On one occasion, after a dinner during which neither of them had spoken more than a few words, I walked outside with Graham. Pausing before he got into a waiting taxi, he turned to me and said, "Your father is the cleverest man I know." As for my father, he told me that Graham was the only Englishman he knew whose conversation was worth listening to.

Since Graham was such a careful writer, he hardly needed editing in the conventional sense of the word. Most of my work consisted of placating him, and although we were friends, I was not spared an occasional sharp rap on the knuckles. A message complaining about flap copy read, "I hate the word 'stunning.' " He added, "I also dislike very much the title 'best selling author,' which is more applicable to Harold Robbins." When I made the mistake of informing him of grandiose plans the company had for a paperback advertising campaign, this was his comment: "They filled me with dismay. Thank God I don't live in the United States." On refusing a series of proposed interviews: "Sorry, but save me from Michiko Kakutani!" Sometimes an outburst was downright curmudgeonly. After we sent him a harmless list of questions from Simon & Schuster's libel lawyer, he had his secretary write me a note dismissing the questions as "complete nonsense," and he added a sharp warning that if we were afraid to publish his book we should let his agent know, so that she could find him a more courageous American publisher. No matter was too small to claim his attention, whether it was getting the exact shade of red for the English telephone booth (later removed altogether) on the dust jacket of "The Human Factor" or the need to respond to William F. Buckley, Jr.,'s allegation that Graham had said "America" was the word he hated most in the English language: "A complete lie," Graham wrote to me. He was outraged not only by misprints in his own books but also by misprints in other Simon & Schuster books.

The task of publishing Graham changed as he aged. At the start, he was still writing the last of his major novels, including "The Honorary Consul" (1973) and "The Human Factor" (1978), both of which became best-sellers. After "The Human Factor," however, while Graham kept to his usual meticulous writing schedule, the books became slimmer, less ambitious, and sometimes esoteric. His eye for human frailty was as sharp as ever, and an acute moral conflict was always present, but the scale had diminished. "Monsignor Quixote," while amusing, was a pastiche of Cervantes and Voltaire's "Candide"; "The Tenth Man" was a rewrite of a screen treatment Graham had done for M-G-M in 1944; and "Doctor Fischer of Geneva; or, The Bomb Party" was a strange and hermetic little fable about greed, which left readers puzzled. There was a certain estrangement between Graham and Simon & Schuster as his sales declined, but this didn't adversely affect our friendship.

Graham's late, minor works were increasingly eccentric, reflecting his involvement with causes and people unlikely to interest the American reader. "An Impossible Woman" (1976) was a memoir by a ninety-year-old neighbor in Capri, which Graham edited; "J'Accuse: The Dark Side of Nice" was an angry and somewhat paranoid denunciation of municipal corruption in that French city. Simon & Schuster declined to publish these incidental works; some were not published here at all. Though Graham's letters conveyed disappointment, he seemed to take the



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changes in stride, and I suspect that they merely confirmed his already low opinion of America's interest in the world beyond its shores. As he grew older, his curiosity and his almost childlike fascination with eccentric and larger-than-life figures increased. In spite of his Catholicism, he was always trying to discover sainthood in secular figures; he prized in others a simplicity and an innocence that he had been denied, and his later works are a kind of pilgrimage in search of a different kind of faith.

GRAHAM liked to feel that he was living "on the dangerous edge of things," and the sensibility behind his cloak-and-dagger novels was reflected in his restless travels and also in his divided loyalties. He was a sentimental leftist when it came to Africa, Cuba, Panama, and Vietnam but a man of old-fashioned Tory attitudes when it came to England. While he remained a friend of Kim Philby, out of dogged personal loyalty, he also maintained his shadowy connections with the British Secret Intelligence Service until near the end of his life.

He often commented on the F.B.I.'s pursuit of him and gleefully speculated on the size of his dossier and on how much trouble the F.B.I. must have had in preparing it. He travelled constantly, and involved himself fearlessly—some would say recklessly—in politics, as if he were determined to add to the bulk of that dossier. "Just think of the money I'm costing them!" he liked to say, delighted at the thought of the documents and reports concerning his activities piling up in Washington. In 1983, he wrote to me that he was just back from visiting Panama, Nicaragua, and Cuba (where he'd spent a day with Fidel Castro). He never made any claim to objectivity, particularly when it came to the United States government; and the world of guilt, betrayal, and ruthlessness which formed the background for so many of his novels influenced the way he saw the real world.

Graham looked for conspiracy everywhere, and found it. He was quite capable of giving even the most harmless activity a sinister interpretation, particularly if his listener was naïve, or credulous about such things. Thus, it has become an accepted fact that in the early fifties he and Alexander Korda were "surveying" the waters off Yugoslavia for the Secret Intelligence Service during an Adriatic cruise on Alex's yacht, even though in all the years I was a regular guest on Elsewhere I never saw anything pursued but pleasure.

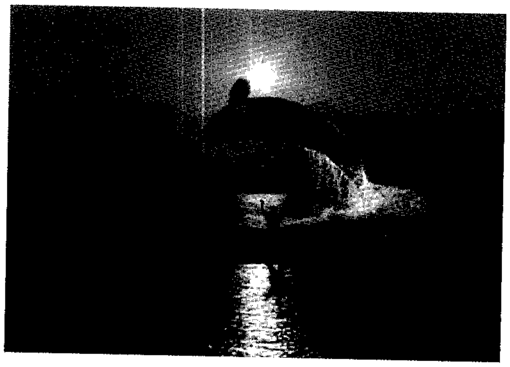
With Graham, it was always difficult to tell where the spy novelist left off and the spy manqué began. From time to time, they came together—as in 1977, when Graham turned up in Washington in the guise of a Panamanian diplomat in the entourage of General Omar Torrijos, the President of Panama. He was photographed standing behind Torrijos and President Carter at the signing of the Panama Canal treaty, and he claimed that no one on the White House staff recognized him. The joke, of course, was that since the early fifties he had been unable to obtain a visa to visit the United States except by obtaining a waiver as "a former Communist," although his membership in the Party had been limited to a few weeks when he was an Oxford undergraduate, in the twenties.

Over the years, Graham became more determined to track down his F.B.I. file, as if it were the Holy Grail. He assumed that somewhere in the J. Edgar Hoover Building, in Washington, someone was gathering a witches' brew of information and misinformation and using it against him at every opportunity.

One day early in 1981, when we met for a drink at the Ritz in London, he asked me if I would be willing to do him a great favor. Anything, I said. He nodded solemnly and joined his long, slim fingers together as if in prayer. He glanced to either side and drew himself closer to me, indicating that this was serious business. He had read about the Freedom of Information Act, he said, and wondered if I could find a way of getting him access to his F.B.I. file. I had no idea how the Freedom of Information Act worked, I told him, but I would do my best. He repeated his request in a letter, adding that, given his views on America's involvement in Vietnam, it was likely to be a bulky dossier, and might possibly provide sufficient material for a short book. He thought that it would be particularly interesting to know who had informed on him over the years. The only things he really wanted at this point in life, he said, were the Nobel Prize and a look at his F.B.I. file.

When I looked into the matter, it turned out to be amazingly simple, but I did not tell Graham this, since he would

"Mr. Potato Head on Line Two."



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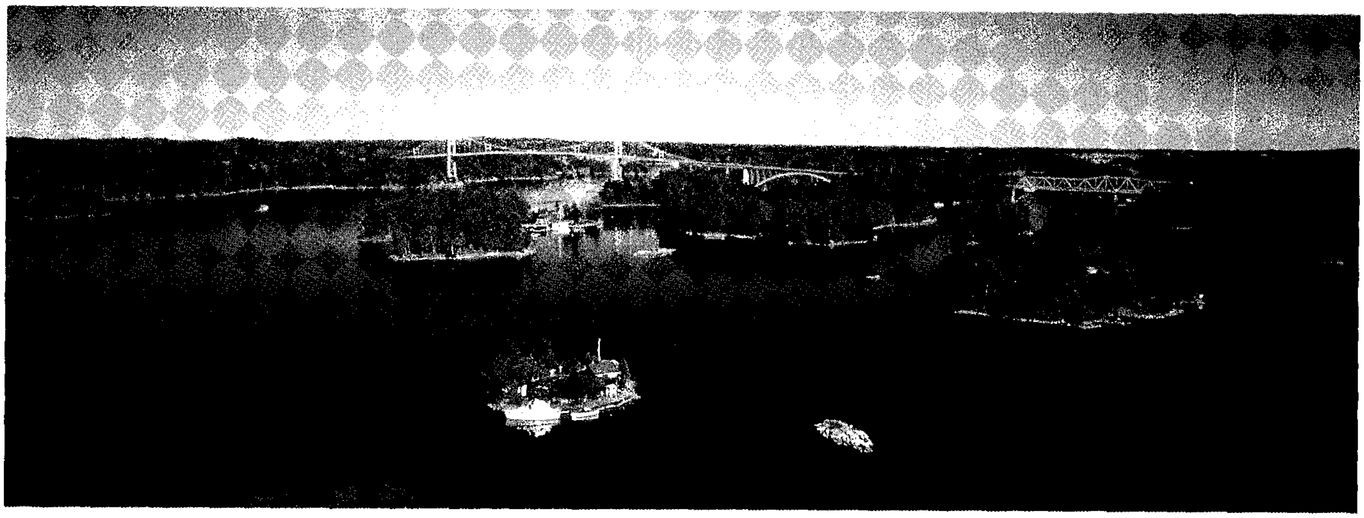

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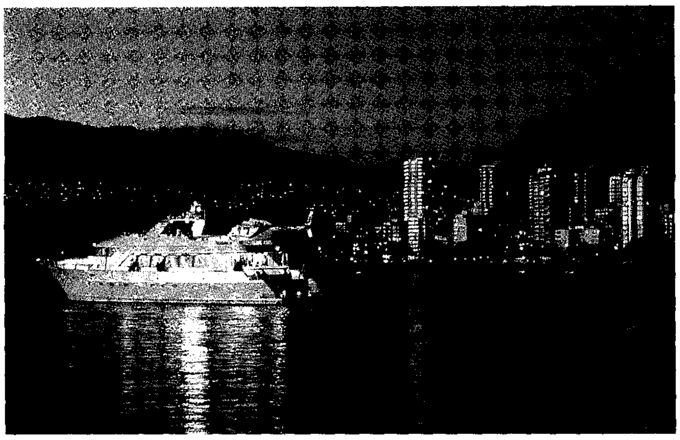

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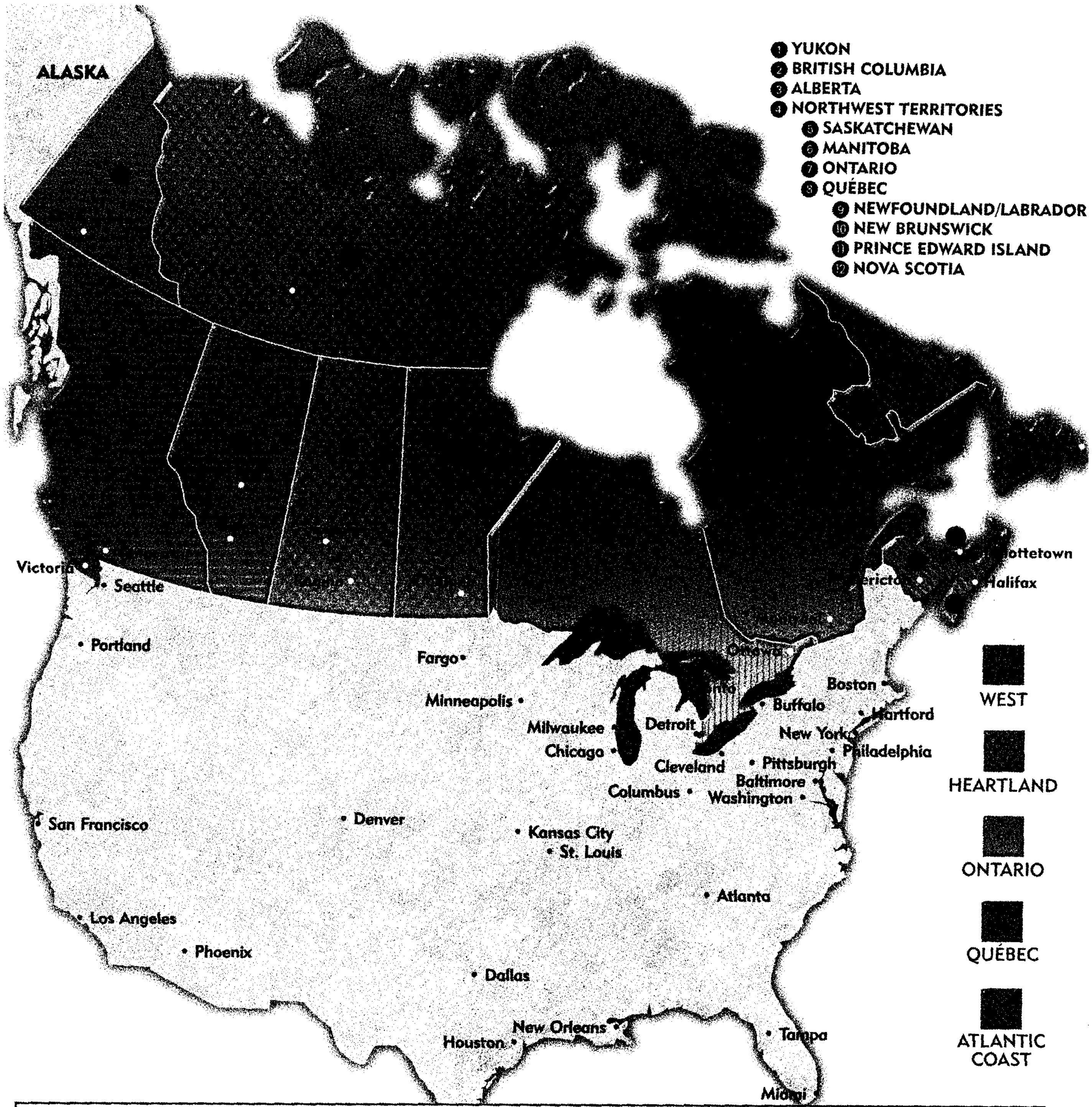

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② BRITISH COLUMBIA
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⑥ MANITOBA
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Phoenix	3-4 hrs	3-4 hrs	4-5 hrs	5-6 hrs	5-6 hrs	6-7 hrs
Dallas	4-5 hrs	3-4 hrs	2-3 hrs	3 hrs	3-4 hrs	5-6 hrs
Chicago	5-6 hrs	3-4 hrs	2 hrs	1-2 hrs	1-2 hrs	3-4 hrs
Detroit	5-6 hrs	4-5 hrs	2-3 hrs	1 hr	1-2 hrs	2-3 hrs
Tampa	7-8 hrs	6-7 hrs	4-5 hrs	2-3 hrs	3-4 hrs	4-5 hrs
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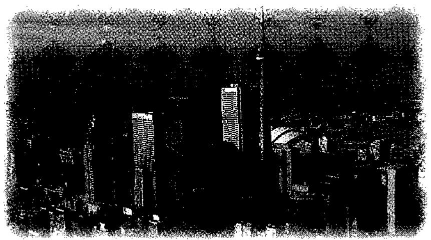

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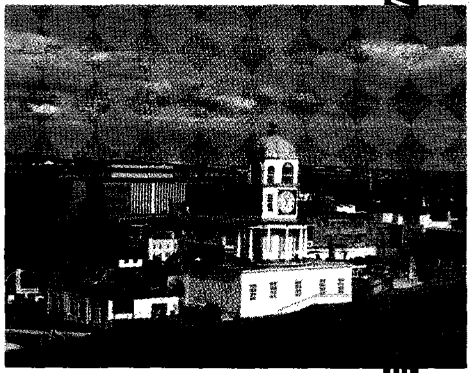

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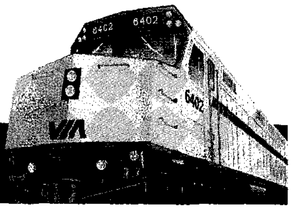

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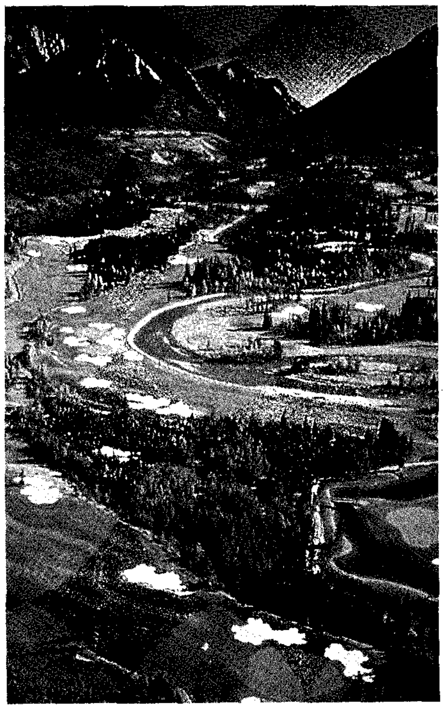
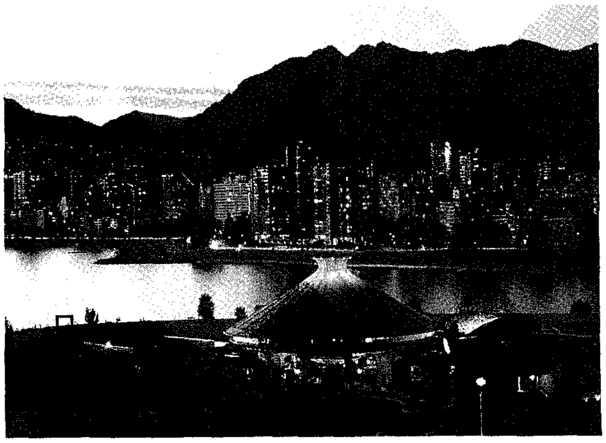

KANANASKIS, ALBERTA


VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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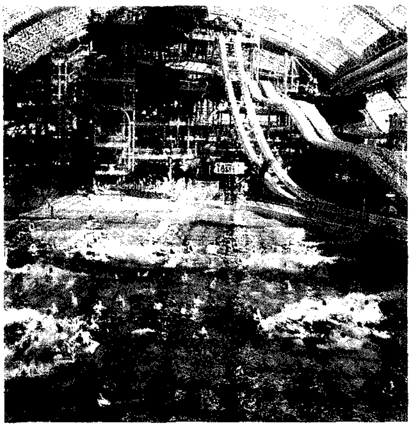
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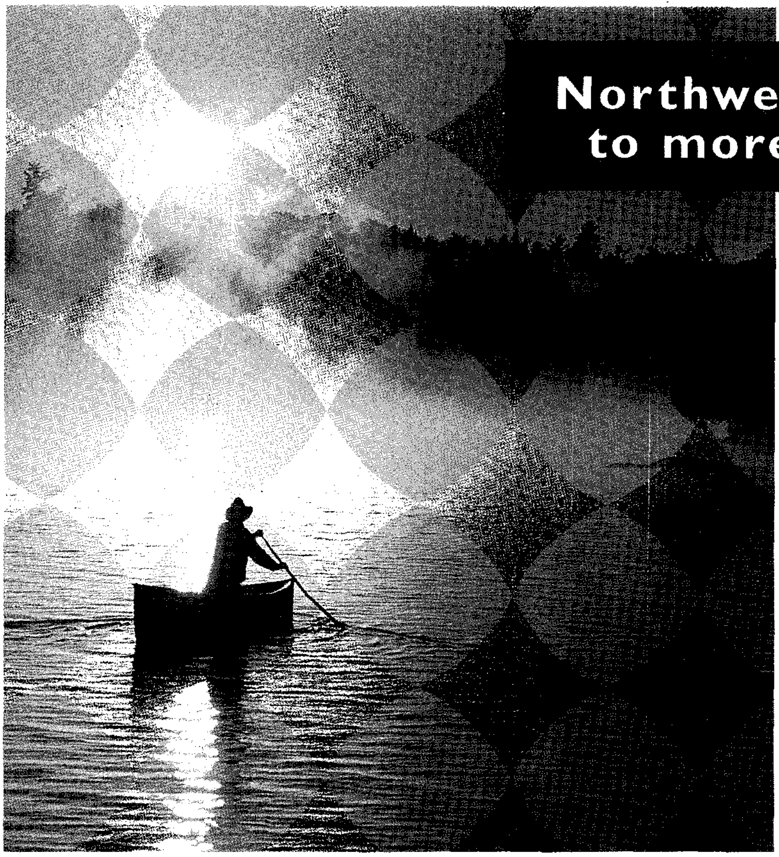

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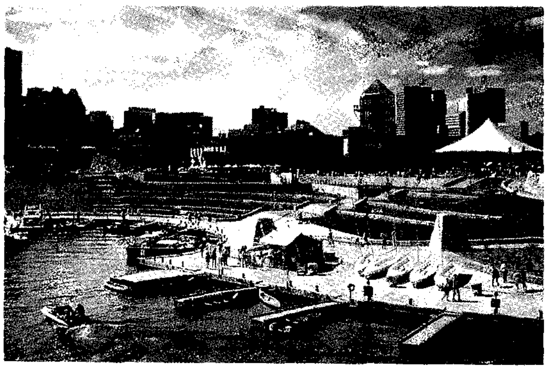

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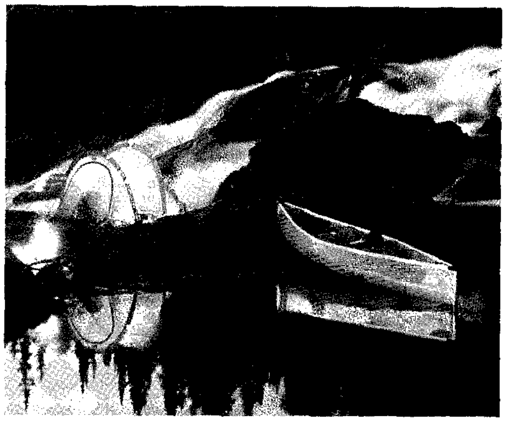
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Festival of the Midnight Sun,
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Toonik Tyme,
Iqaluit, Northwest Territories

8th Annual Great Northern Arts Festival,
Inuvik, Northwest Territories

RCMP Sunset Retreat Ceremonies,
Regina, Saskatchewan

Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Trial of Louis Riel,
Regina, Saskatchewan

Folklorama,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Festival du Voyageur,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada's National Ukrainian Festival,
Dauphin, Manitoba

For detailed information on this region, call:

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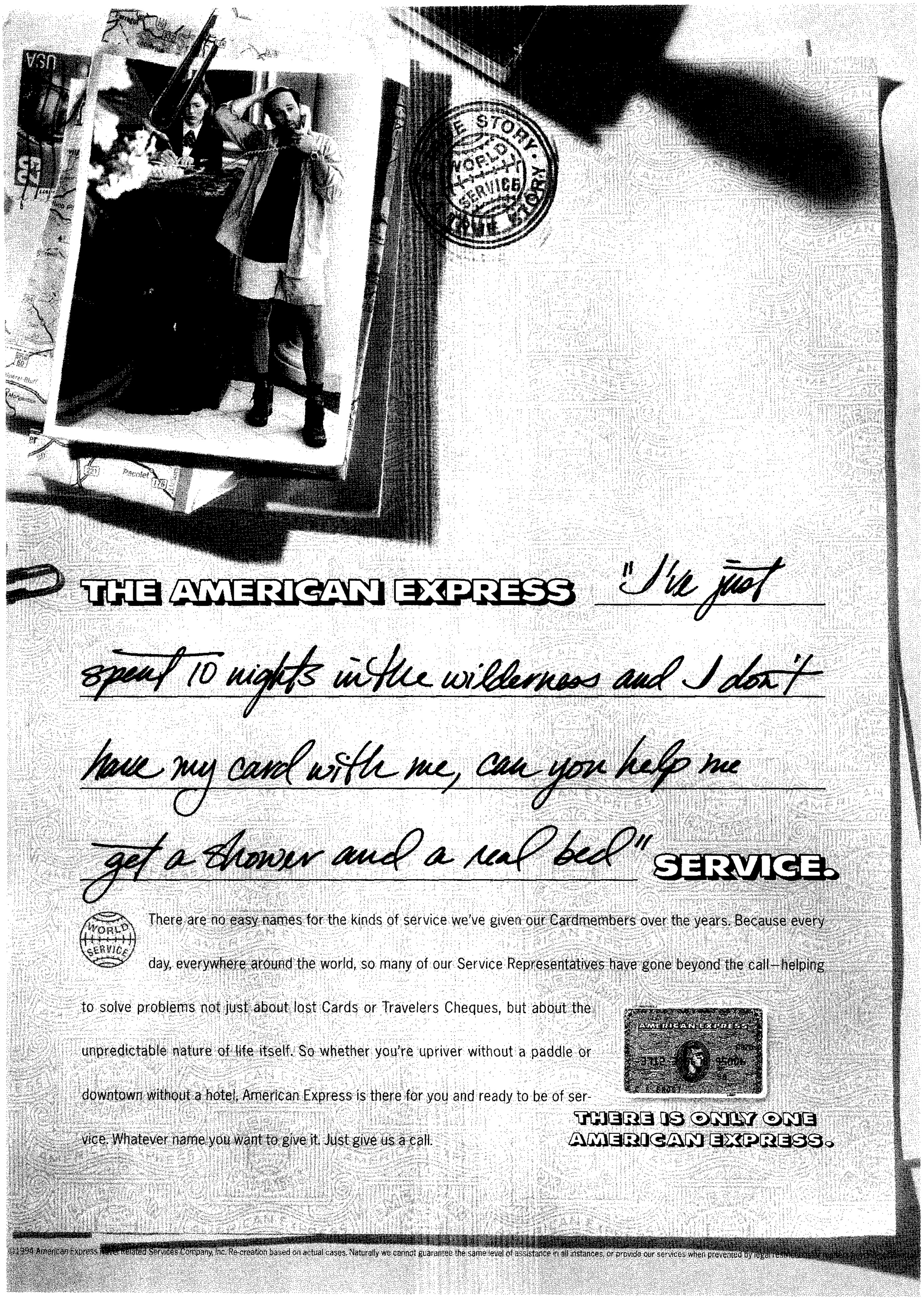

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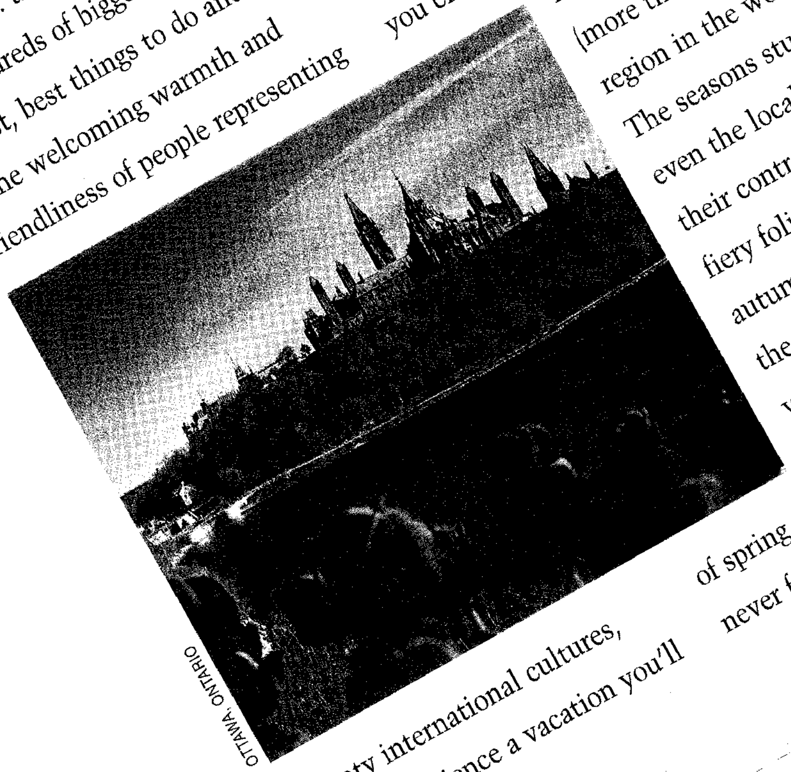
Advertisement

Glassy lake and tumbling river contrasted with the sparkle of diverse city cultures. So much to marvel at, so much so different to do. And all to be found in a place called

ONTARIO

TORONTO SKYLINE, ONTARIO

Absolutely unique and unusual adventures: that's Ontario. From the hundreds of biggest, tallest, longest, best things to do and see ... to the welcoming warmth and friendliness of people representing seventy international cultures, you'll experience a vacation you'll never forget. Nestled along the northern shores of the Great Lakes, Ontario dips as far south as Northern California and as far north as Sweden. The explorer in you craves to paddle the 60,000 miles of canoe routes (more than any other region in the world). The seasons stun even the locals with their contrasts: the fiery foliage of autumn turning to the glittering white of winter slipping into the glorious blooming of spring. And warm summers never forgotten.



OTTAWA, ONTARIO

As pristine as is Ontario's great outdoors, so too are the cities. Your pace picks up in Toronto, as the city's energy and style invigorates you. Dine high atop a slowly turning skyscraper restaurant. Take in some of the hundreds of theatrical experiences offered in the third largest English-speaking theater center in the world. Join in the scintillating Caribana parade that turns a Toronto summer into a rainbow. Stroll through acres of city parks and gardens. Wander through the lively Harbourfront parks, restaurants, shops, artists' studios on the shores of Lake Ontario. Pack a picnic and ride a quaint ferry boat to the Toronto

Islands where you can feed the geese, and walk the boardwalk beside the shore. Visit internationally acclaimed museums and art galleries and then shop at the Eaton Centre or visit the trendy boutiques in elegant Yorkville. Visit the ultra-modern SkyDome and the CN Tower, the world's tallest building. Take the children to Ontario Place, a 96-acre entertainment complex, or to the Ontario Science Centre where everyone gets involved. And treat your palate to more cuisine choices than you can in any other city in the world.

In Canada's capital, Ottawa, you'll hear words in English, words in French, as you take in the cultural phenomenon that distinguishes the city. You can stroll among the largest exhibition of tulips in the world. Visit open air markets, country fairs, hoedowns, powwows. On Parliament Hill, chat with Mounties, explore the historic Parliament Buildings, and visit the Peace Tower overlooking the Ottawa River. And don't miss the colorful Changing of the Guard ceremony. Check out the wine bars and chic restaurants of the old-time Byward Market with its farmers' stalls overflowing with brilliant flowers and fresh produce, and colorful butcher and fishmonger shops. Take a lazy boat cruise on the lovely Rideau Canal that runs through the city and, in winter, turns into the world's longest skating rink! And retrace Canada's history at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Discover Canadian artists at the National Gallery. Everywhere you turn, you are presented with the gracious aspects of the city: stately buildings, soaring spires, and exquisite gardens.

From Ottawa, you can meander through the rolling Ottawa Valley and visit Merrickville, one of the most picturesque villages on the Rideau Canal with its quaint nineteenth-century buildings of antiques and crafts. You'll experience history among period-costumed folk at Upper Canada Village in Morrisburg. From Gananoque or Kingston, cruise the Thousand Islands, floating past charming towns and millionaires' homes. In Kingston, take in the outstanding limestone architecture at Queen's University and see one of the finest restored fortresses anywhere, massive Fort Henry, with military drills, parades, re-enactments of cannon battles. While in Picton, walk through the world's largest system of freshwater sand dunes. Visit the scenic Kawartha region and spend

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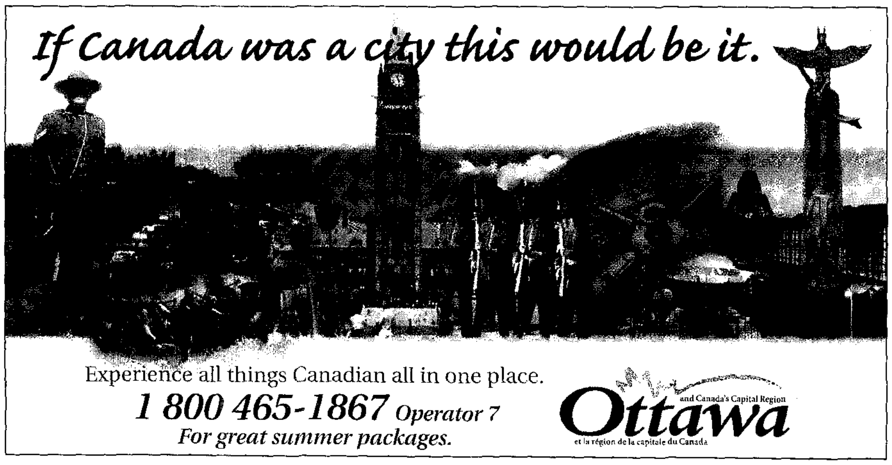
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et la région de la capitale du Canada

a day or two at a cheerful family-owned resort. In nearby Peterborough, see the highest hydraulic lift lock in the world and study ancient native rock carvings over one thousand years old at Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Rent a houseboat and cruise the lakes and locks, past granite walls, islands, and quiet coves.

Escape to Thunder Bay this Summer

Summer in Thunder Bay is refreshing - and fun! Here on the north shore of Lake Superior you'll find affordable hotels and restaurants, well-appointed campgrounds, beautiful parks, art galleries, a large marina, and world-famous Old Fort William - all just minutes away from the cool northern forest.

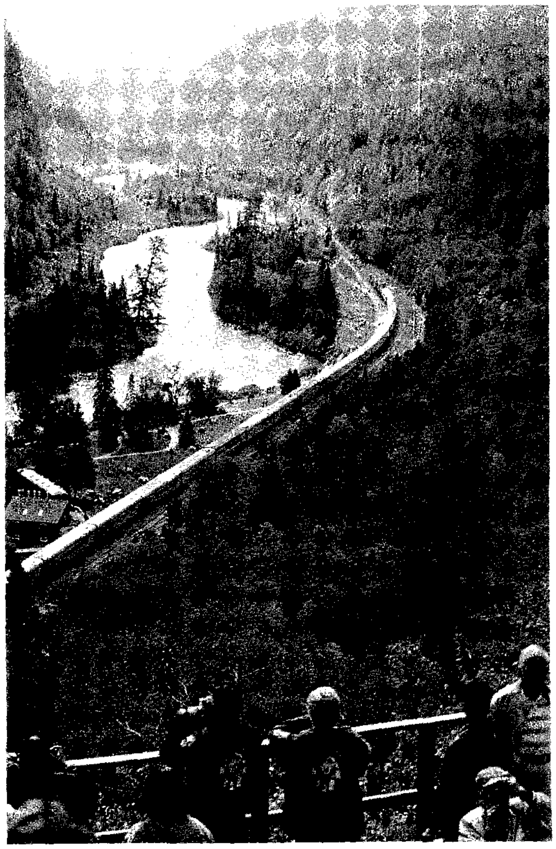
Ask for more. Write:
Tourism Thunder Bay, 500 Donald St., E.,
Thunder Bay, ON, Canada P7E 5V3, or call
1-800-667-8386

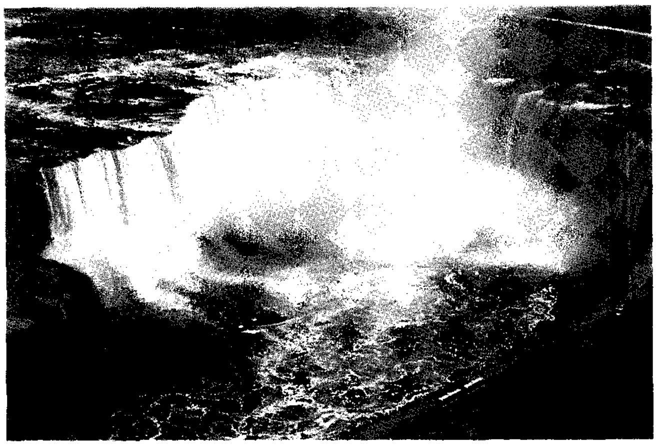
TOURISM **Thunder Bay**
Superior by Nature

Northern Ontario offers you some wonderfully different experiences and pleasures. Visit Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, an authentically recreated sixteenth-century Huron Indian Village. Cruise from Gravenhurst aboard the elegantly-restored Segwun steamship past palatial Victorian homes standing proudly on the shores of Lake Muskoka. You can canoe, hike, bike, walk the routes and trails of a wilderness park almost 5,000 square miles in size. Then curl up beside a crackling fire at any of hundreds of fine resorts or charming country inns. Visit North Bay, birthplace of the Dionne quintuplets. And don't miss Manitoulin Island, the world's largest freshwater island, for native culture and picturesque waterfalls. Ride the rails of adventure across towering trestles, past waterfalls, through hushed pine forests aboard the Agawa Canyon Train leaving from Sault Ste. Marie. Take an underground gold mine tour in Timmins. Then, further on, board the Polar Bear Express at Cochrane for an adventurous train ride to the arctic shores of Hudson Bay. In Thunder Bay, visit Old Fort William, the world's largest reconstructed fur-trading post where you can see "Great Rendez Vous" which re-enacts the exciting and colorful annual gathering of fur-trading company employees, voyageurs, and native fur traders. Visit the Amethyst Mine Panorama, the largest gemstone mine in North America, and pick your own amethysts along the way.

MORRISBURG, ONTARIO

Southwestern Ontario is a land of rolling hills and lush farmlands. Just west of Toronto, visit


AGAWA CANYON, ONTARIO


NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

Hamilton's Royal Botanical Gardens and stroll through the rose gardens, view the world's largest collection of lilacs, or experience life as it was in 1850 at Dundurn Castle. Niagara-on-the-Lake is a nineteenth-century town nestled beside lush vineyards. Here you will spend a night or two at a charming bed-and-breakfast home and take in a play or two by George Bernard Shaw. Nearby, you will hold your breath as you witness one of the natural wonders of the world, the roaring Niagara Falls. Perhaps you'll put on a raincoat and take a breathtaking boat ride aboard the Maid of the Mist and sail right into the spray of the crashing water. Take the picturesque Niagara Parkway and head for Fort Erie, an important point during the 1812 conflict between British and American forces. Following the north shore of Lake Erie, you will come to Point Pelee National Park which offers the best inland birdwatching in North America; in autumn, you can witness the amazing migration of the monarch butterfly. See the old Underground Railway in Dresden where you'll find the original Uncle Tom's Cabin. A few miles north-east, see Shakespeare lovingly and entertainingly rendered in Stratford which sits on the shore of the River Avon. Head to Kitchener-Waterloo, home of North America's largest Oktoberfest. Sample the local fare of the Mennonites in St. Jacobs and Elmira and see where the Grand River tumbles over The Cascade in the center of Elora, a restored artistic community.

The biggest, the best, the most surprising. Unique and unforgettable, that's Ontario!

Festivals / Events

Shaw Festival,
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Canadian Tulip Festival,
Ottawa

Stratford Festival,
Stratford

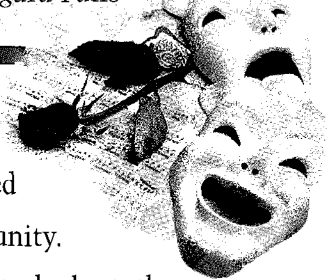
Agawa Canyon Train Tour,
Sault Ste. Marie

Polar Bear Express,
Cochrane

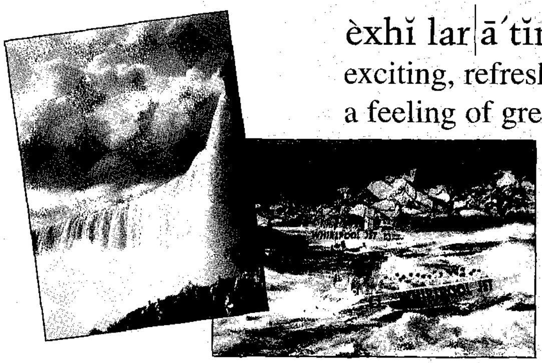
Caribana Festival,
Toronto

Oktoberfest,
Kitchener-Waterloo

Winter Festival of Lights,
Niagara Falls



A WORD ABOUT NIAGARA FALLS CANADA...



èxhĭ lar|ā´ting adj:
exciting, refreshing;
a feeling of great pleasure.

need we say more?
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For detailed information on this region, call:
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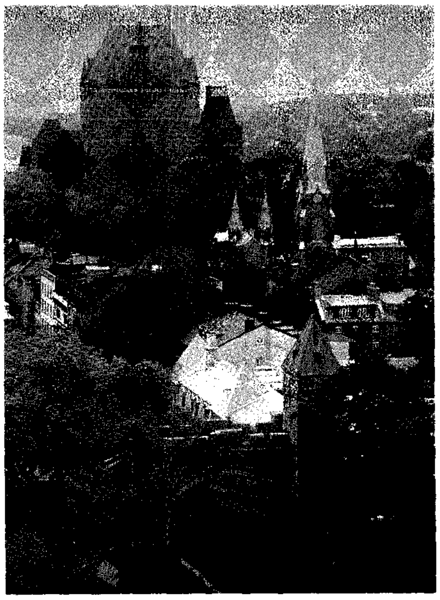
Easy to get to, easy to get around. Within hours, you could be settled into one of Québec's sophisticated cities. Given just a few days, you could explore the city - and still add on regional excursions that can be as relaxing - or rejuvenating, as you choose.

Your romantic adventure à la Montréal begins as soon as you step out on the chic, cosmopolitan streets. Here is a city as ancient as its dozens of historic sites, as new as the dazzling casino on the Parc des Îles. Stroll along the waterfront, through acres of parklands and the gorgeous mountain in the middle. Discover the subterranean city with its miles of superb shopping. And explore the old town where at times you'll feel as if you're in the colonial center of New France: centuries-old weathered stone buildings loom around you, the clip-clop of horse's hooves on cobblestones takes you past romantic cafés and boutiques. Nearby, the glittering Notre-Dame Basilica, an architectural treasure among treasures, welcomes you inside. Everywhere you turn, there are street performers, galleries, theaters, festivals, fireworks and laughter. Listen to the lilting strains from one of the world's great symphony orchestras. And "love to learn" at the Biodôme, where you journey from a tropical land to polar ice cap and discover



CHÂTEAU FRONTENAC, QUÉBEC CITY

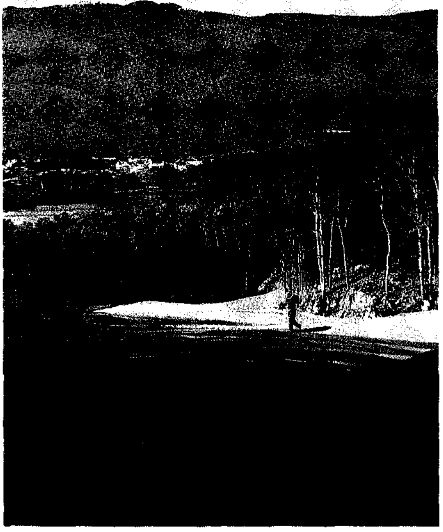
Advertisement

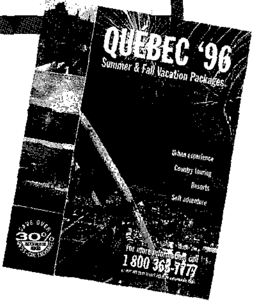
everything between.

Sooner or later, you'll follow your heart to Québec City, cradle of French civilization in North America. And why not when it's only 2-1/2 hours drive from Montréal? Behind the imposing fortifications of this UNESCO - listed world heritage city, you'll find picture-book streets and ancient stone buildings. Many are, in fact, charming inns or bed and breakfast hideaways. Walk the Citadel ramparts and nearby Plains of Abraham where British and French troops clashed long ago. Stroll the cliff-tops along Dufferin Terrace under the turrets of the venerable Château Frontenac and look out over the beautiful St. Lawrence River to Île d'Orléans with its historic homes and farming villages. Then glance down to the old town, where fascinating shops and candle-lit restaurants line the twisted, cobbled allées. Drink in the romance, but try not to stay up too late.

PERCÉ ROCK, GASPÉ PENINSULA

For tomorrow, the true charm of a city stay in Québec reveals itself - the countryside awaits! Travel just one hour in any direction, and vast forests, lakes and riverside resorts are yours. Travel another day and you could watch whales, sail the Saguenay fjord and overnight in an artist colony's village. Or a beachside inn nestled near a monolithic rock. You could golf on country estates, fish favorite rivers, camp, hike, cycle, hang-glide or simply hang out. And still be back in the city in just a few days! Only you'll wish you had longer. Perhaps to return in fall, as more and more savvy travellers are doing - when the blaze of colors and the crisp air heightens the senses, making the appetite for golf and fine fall dining even keener.


MONT TREMBLANT, LAURENTIANS



Whatever the season, wherever you go, from sophisticated cities to romantic regions - the Laurentians, Eastern Townships, Charlevoix, Bas Saint-Laurent, Gaspé Peninsula and so many others, the lure of the names lingers in the memory like a love song. Listen to the melody. It's closer than you think.

Festivals / Events

Molson Grand Prix of Canada,
Montréal

René Magritte Exhibition,
Montréal

Just for Laughs Festival,
Montréal

Benson & Hedges International Fireworks Competition,
Montréal

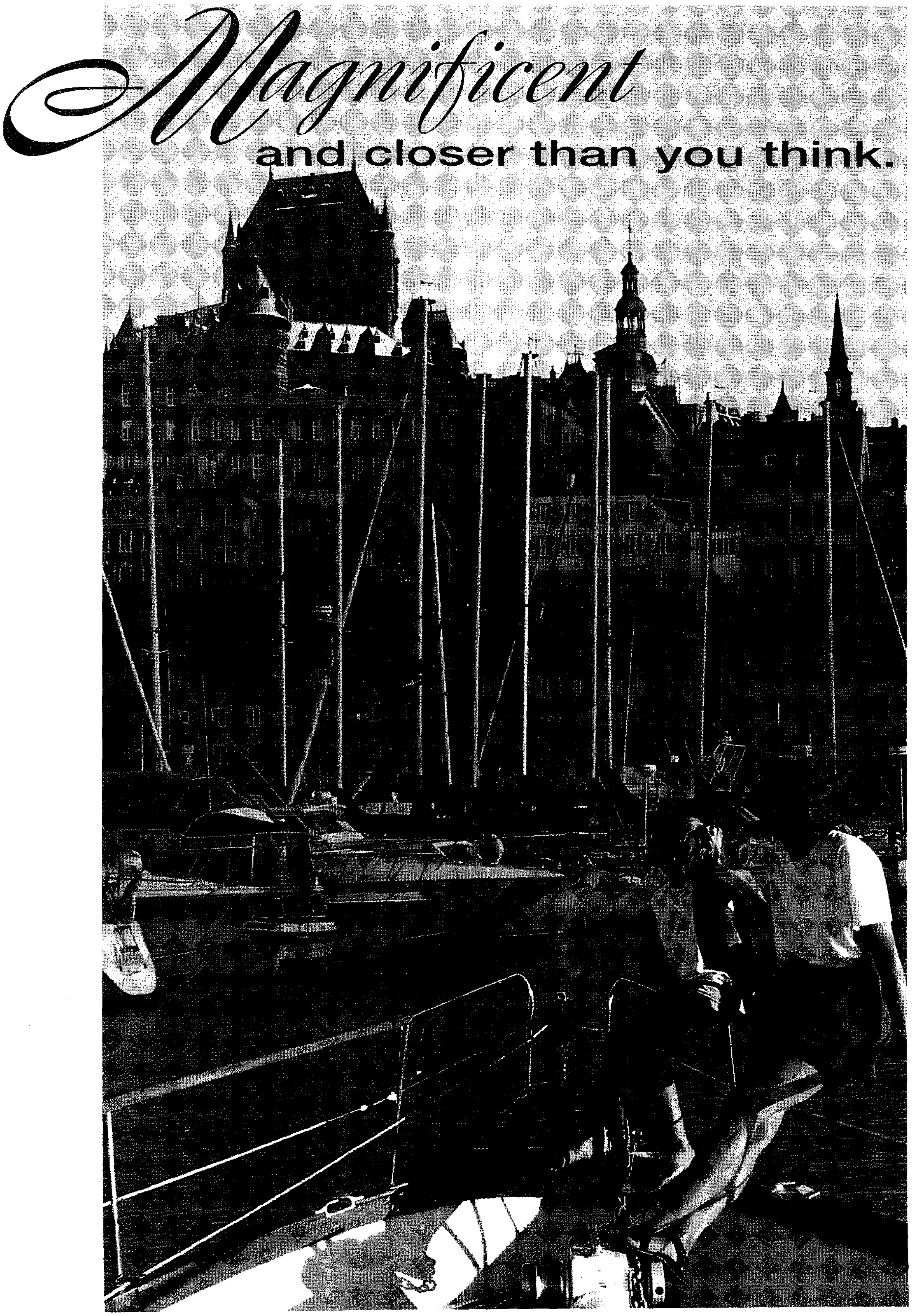
Festival international de Jazz,
Montréal

Festival d'été international,
Québec City

Fall Foliage,
Mid-Sept. to mid-Oct.

World Film Festival,
Montréal, Aug.-Sept.

For detailed information on this region, call:
1-800-363-7777 (Ask for operator 003)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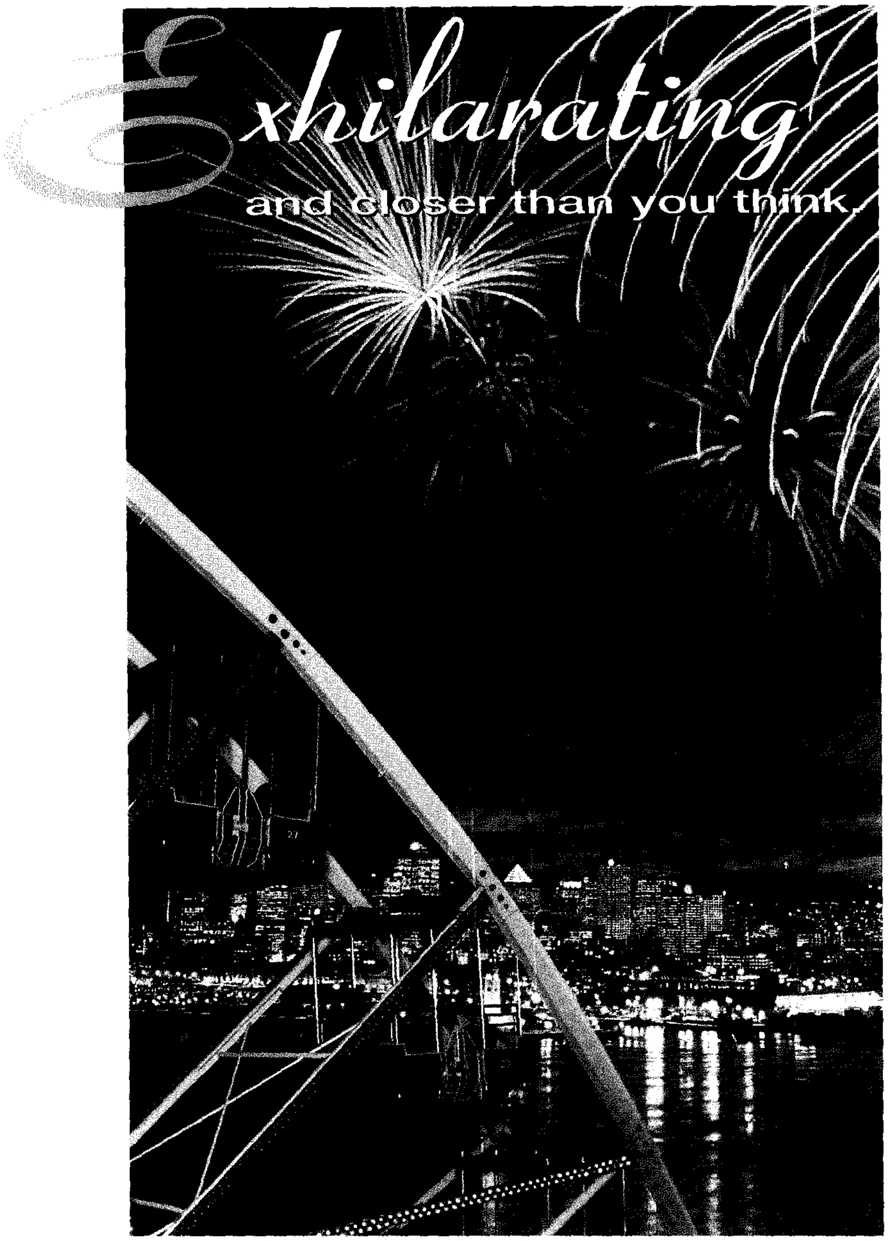
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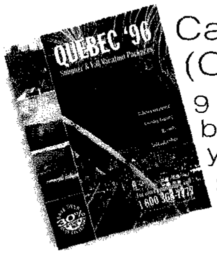
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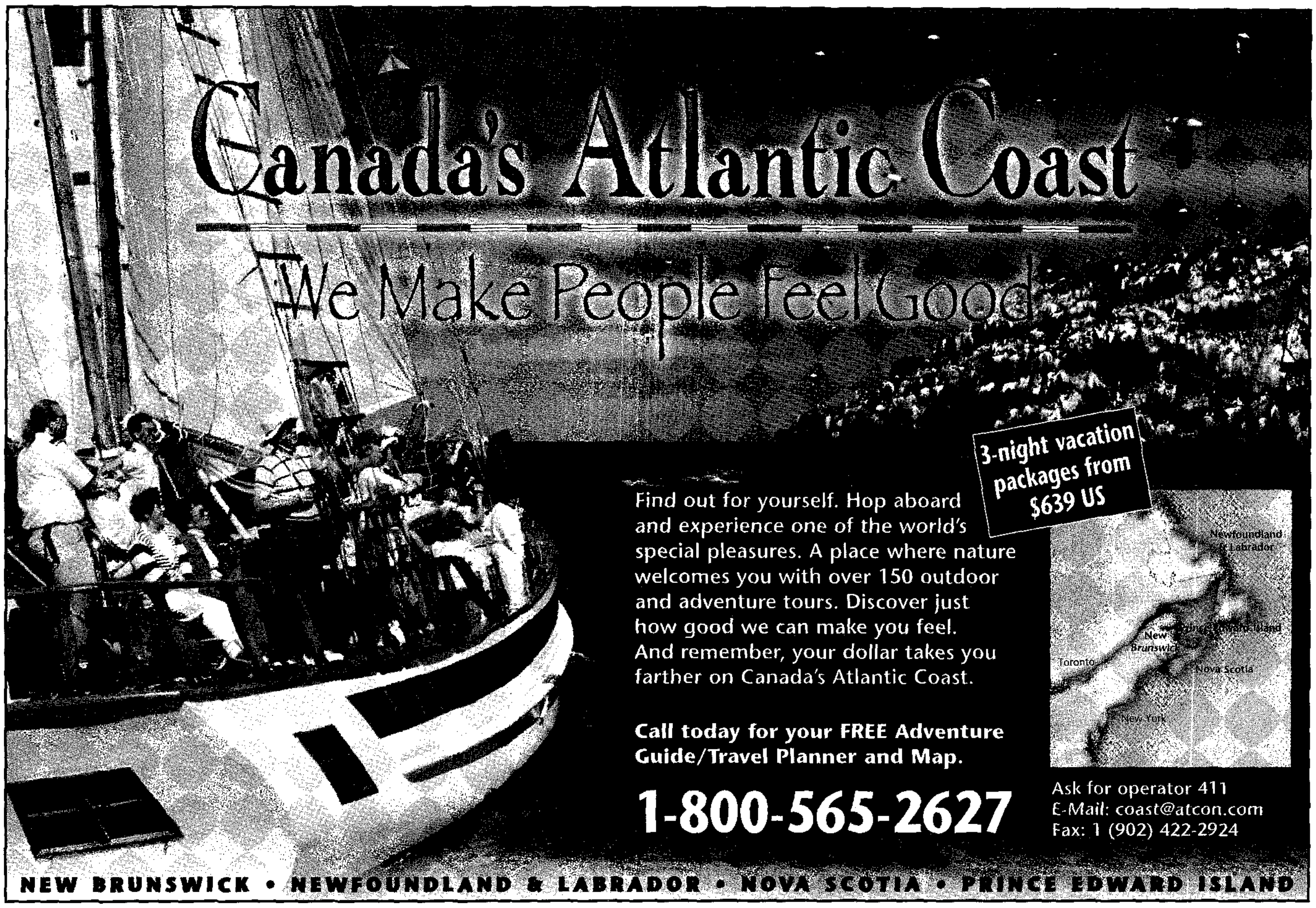
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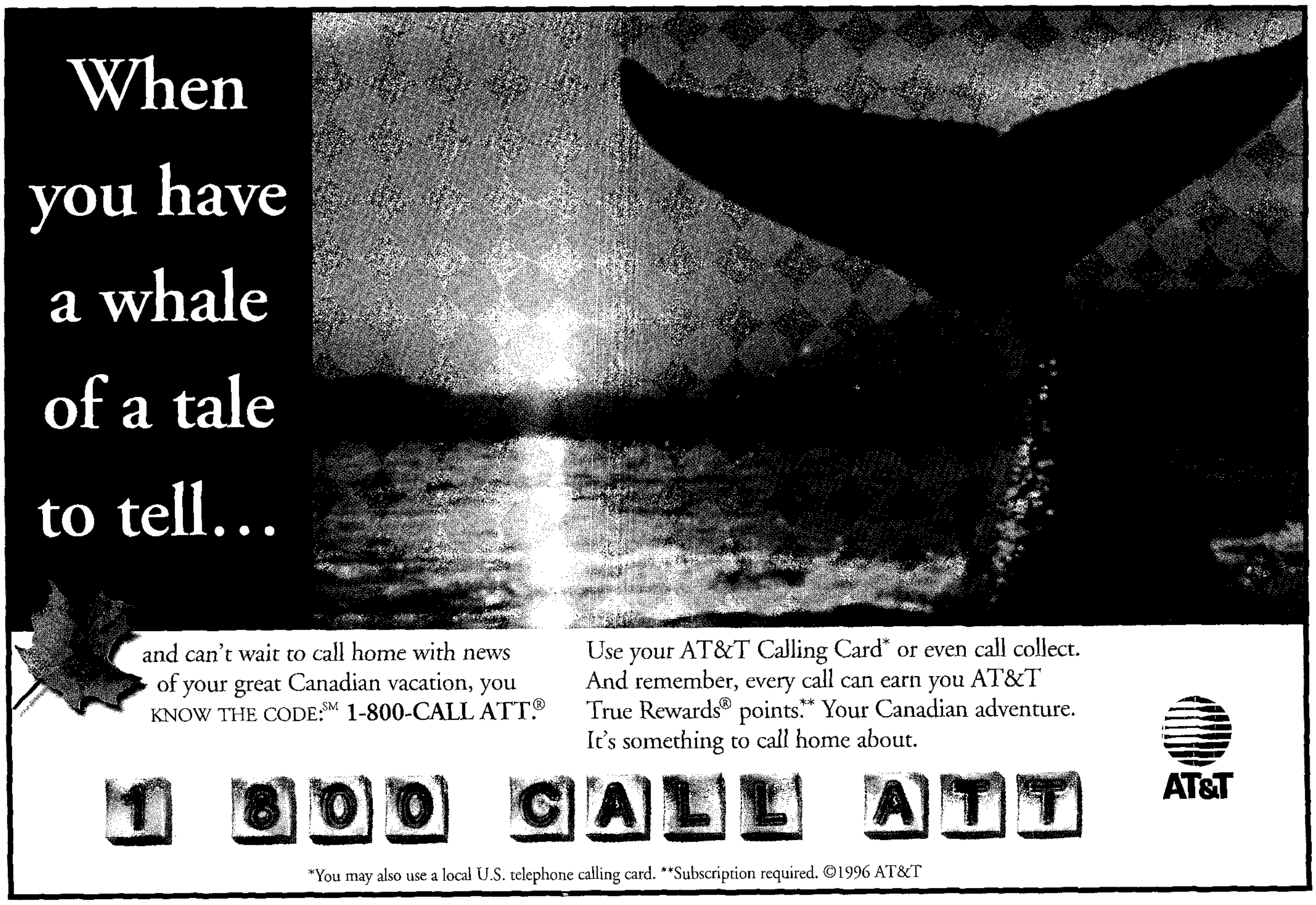
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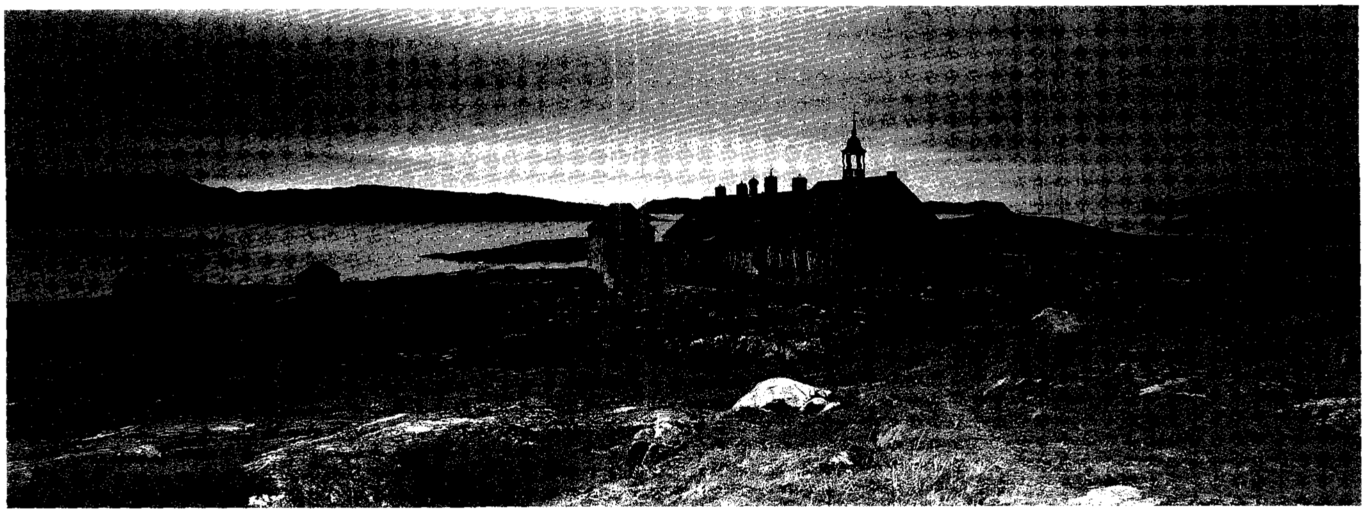
A hush. Nature speaks: A dark weight shudders the sea's surface,
huge, primeval, mysterious and grand. It is called whale.
But it is life on Canada's eastern

ATLANTIC COAST



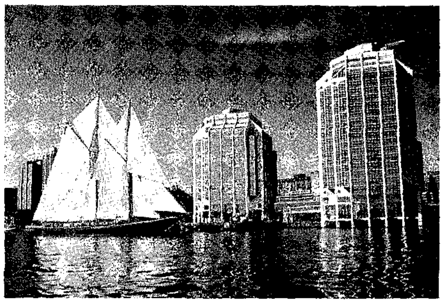
THE MORAVIAN MISSION
AT HEBRON INTERNATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, LABRADOR

The paradoxical power and tranquility of the Atlantic Ocean has shaped the shores of four provinces and the natures of the people. You find warm tranquil beaches and imposing crags, easy roads and deep-souled forests, softly rolling farmlands and mighty seas. The people, from dozens of different backgrounds, are everywhere diverse but warm-hearted, welcoming, helpful, and caring.

Newfoundland & Labrador. Where the New World begins. Where Marconi took the first call. Where a lighthouse has stood for over 150 years. Home of the oldest city in North America, St. John's. See the harbor where forty vessels lay anchored forty years before the Mayflower landed. Come walk in Gros Morne, a park where you are hemmed in by granite walls, where you will meet giant arctic hares and rare wild orchids. Watch whales, dolphins, porpoises, and icebergs drifting by. Take a peek at puffins, kittiwakes, and razorbills. Talk with people whose ancestry goes back to England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Portugal, and Spain. Meet hangashores and seafarers, boatbuilders and musicians. And never forget, you are standing on land once home to Vikings.

THE LINKS AT CROWBUSH COVE, LAKESIDE, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Nova Scotia is the spirit of the sea, where 1996 is the Year of the Wooden Boat. Fun and fellowship rule in an offbeat, whimsical way. Embrace history and heritage with lobster festivals, highland games and dory races, magical maritime culture. Where nature means some of North America's most accessible seacoast, whale-watching, deep-sea fishing. Or sea-kayaking. Or hiking the highlands of Cape Breton. Or raft-riding the world's highest tides. Or sailing Canada's nautical legend, Bluenose II. Where lighthouses glow and the ghosts of crusty sea captains stroll the widows' walks of Victorian mansions. Time-travel back at Fortress Louisbourg, the continent's largest historical restoration. Shop, dine, dance amid the vibrancy of cosmopolitan Halifax, and then curl up beside the cosy fire of a country inn. This land of lighthouses, fishing wharves, lobster traps, and fog horns is deep in stories of pirate gold and rum runners and ghostly galleons. Open your heart to the open hearts of the people of Nova Scotia.


THE BLUENOSE, HALIFAX HARBOR, NOVA SCOTIA

New Brunswick – and the world's wildest tides rampaging four stories high. Spot flowerpot rocks sculpted by the sea. Wander warm saltwater beaches, deep forests, and enchanting river valleys. Powerful tides turn back the St. John River and create the Reversing Falls at Saint John. Walk the 18th-century paths of the Acadians, walk the ocean floor, join in the life of spinning, churning, and kneading at Kings Landing Historical Settlement. Stroll boardwalks over fragile sand dunes and protected nests of piping plovers. Join in the festivities: the Irish Festival with pubs, dancing and pipe bands; the Lobster Festival with outdoor entertainment and famous lobster suppers; Festival Acadian featuring concerts, exhibitions, and celebrations of the Acadian culture. In the capital, Fredericton, take a picturesque boat cruise on the majestic St. John River, shop for pewter and stained glass. Get in on our innovative Day Adventures. Take in the Highland Games and don't miss the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival. New Brunswick: you didn't expect to make so many new friends, did you?

And Prince Edward Island, "the fairest land 'tis possible to see." The Islanders believe this place the most relaxing in North America. So take your time and explore the land where Lucy Maud Montgomery set her novels. Green Gables House awaits your visit. Here the soil is red and our beaches are tints of white and pink and ruddy, and splashed by the warm water of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On the North Shore, climb 60-foot sand dunes. Choose from a dozen first-class golf courses including Canada's "best new course in 1994", The Links at Crowbush Cove. Stroll or cycle our Island along a network of trails that let you see the Island close-up. See the seals? You can. And you can take a harbor tour, go saltwater fishing, even take a sea-kayaking expedition. And afterwards, lobster suppers, steamed Island Blue Mussels, Malpeque Oysters and tender new local potatoes fresh from the garden. Body and soul harmonized on Prince Edward Island.

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Festivals / Events

Newfoundland & Labrador Folk Festival,
St. John's, Newfoundland

"New Founde Lande" Trinity Pageant, *Trinity, Newfoundland*

Mahone Bay Wooden Boat Festival,
Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

Antigonish Highland Games,
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

Festival International de Musique Baroque,
Lamèque, New Brunswick

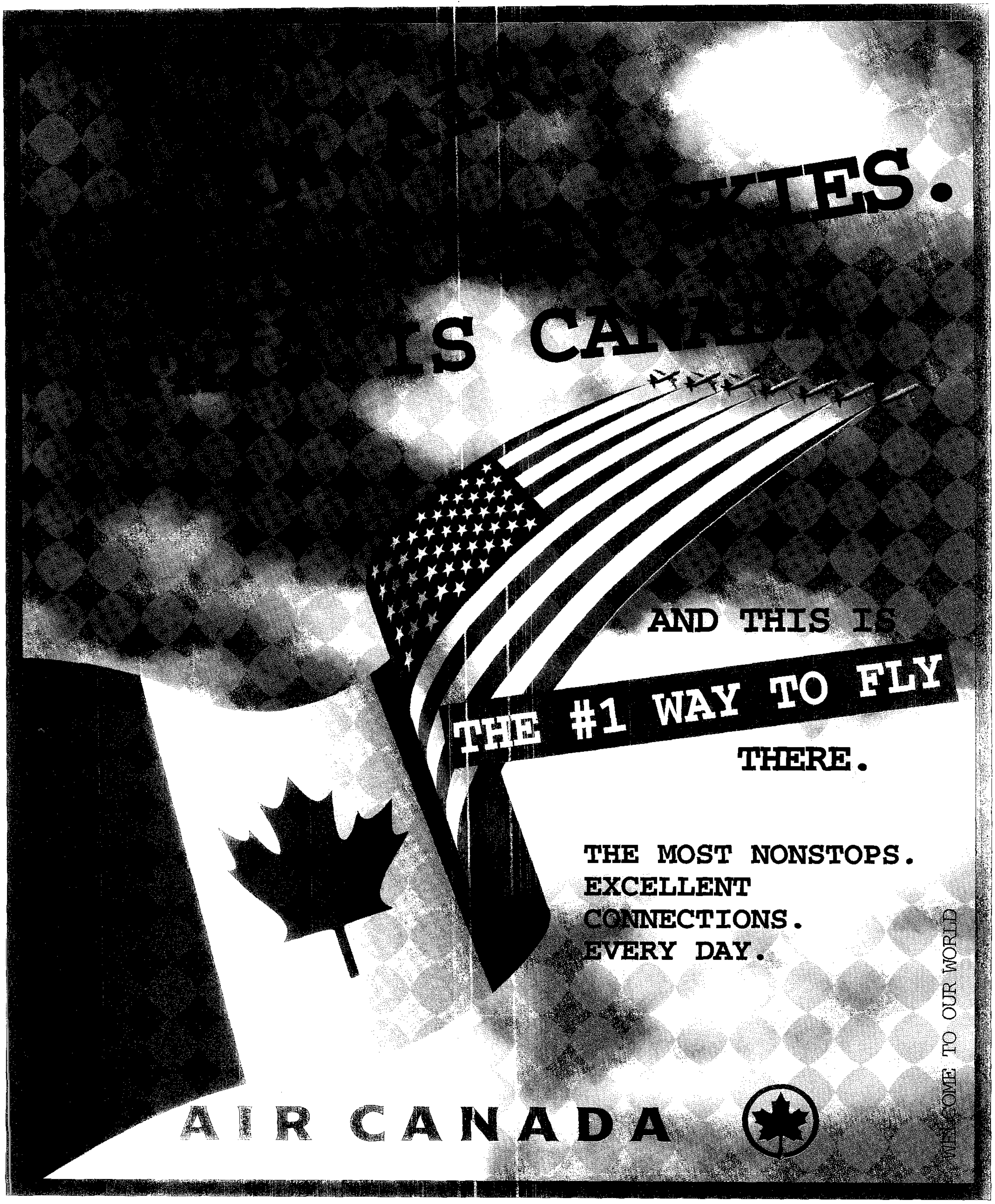
Festival by the Sea,
Saint John, New Brunswick

Charlottetown Festival,
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Summerside Highland Gathering,
Summerside, Prince Edward Island

For detailed information on this region, call:

Newfoundland & Labrador: *1-800-563-NFLD (6353)(Op #100)* **Nova Scotia:** *1-800-565-0000 (Op #305)*
New Brunswick: *1-800-561-0123* **Prince Edward Island:** *1-800-463-4PEI (Ask for Emma)*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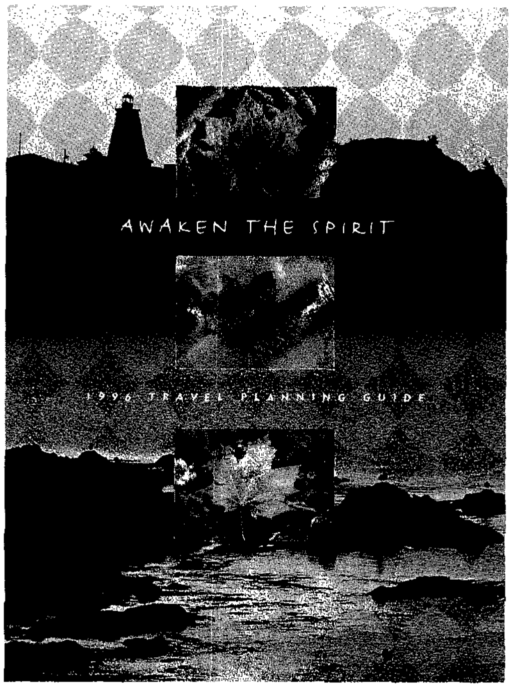

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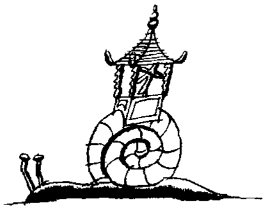
THE WORLD NEEDS MORE
CANADA

Advertising supplement to The New Yorker.

have been hugely disappointed. All I had to do was get a lawyer to make an application to the F.B.I. and then wait. Time, it seemed, was the major impediment; perhaps the government hoped that applicants would simply lose patience and give up. Over the next few months, Graham asked me many times if there was any news, and he wondered if the F.B.I. was using the delay to destroy or alter its records on him.



Finally, the Graham Greene dossier arrived, in a disappointingly slim envelope. My heart sank. There were only a dozen or so documents, several of them newspaper clippings. One item was a clipping from Walter Winchell's column in the New York *Mirror*, dated December 19, 1956. Winchell wrote, "Hollywood newspaper people are not happy about America's most-decorated soldier (Audie Murphy) taking the lead role in the film version of 'The Quiet American,' which libels Americans. The author of the book admits being an ex-Commy." The clipping was carefully pasted to a sheet of paper, at the top of which Clyde Tolson, Hoover's assistant, had checked a line next to his name, to indicate that he had read it. Another item was a reply to a request for information from Marvin Watson, a Presidential aide in the Lyndon Johnson White House. He wondered whether any of the public figures he had seen mentioned in some anti-Vietnam War literature, including Graham Greene, were Communists. The F.B.I.'s memo to Watson explained helpfully that Greene was not a Communist and that he was "a well-known Catholic British writer."

The only other document of note was a lengthy report on preparations for a World Congress of Intellectuals, which was held in Wroclaw, Poland, in 1948. Graham Greene was on the list of planned participants, along with Pablo Neruda, Jorge Amado, Louis Aragon, Le Corbusier, Brecht, Peter Ritchie Calder, Randall Jarrell, and Ruth Benedict. A note at the bottom of the list of names warns that John Rogge, an Assistant Attorney General during the New Deal, "is bringing an address from Henry Wallace." Apparently, the worst thing that the F.B.I. could produce about Graham was that he planned to listen to an address from the former Vice-President of the United States. Some documents had been withheld, and several memos to J. Edgar Hoover had been completely blacked out, but I could turn up no evidence that the F.B.I. was concealing a major investigative cache. There were no spies, no records of telephone conversations, no surveillance of his visit to Fidel Castro or his travels in Vietnam, no accusations of smoking opium or visiting prostitutes, no mention, even, of his having been a member of the British Intelligence Service or a close friend of Kim Philby. He had not been a thorn in Hoover's side, nor had he been a target of constant F.B.I. surveillance. I mailed the file to Graham, knowing that it was going to be a terrible letdown for him.

It was. Graham brooded darkly on the possibility that the F.B.I. dossier was a fake—that the real file, with all the dirt, had been concealed somewhere—and from time to time he urged me to inquire further.

Perhaps because Graham associated me with this blow, our publishing relationship finally deteriorated beyond the possibility of repair. With a message just as cutting as the one he had sent Tom Guinzburg, he dismissed Simon & Schuster as his publisher and went back to Viking. The ostensible reason was that he had been upset upon learning that so many copies of "Getting to Know the General" had been remaindered. (Its commercial fate should not have been surprising, since the 1984 memoir was a slim volume praising the late General Torrijos and suggesting that the C.I.A. might have arranged the plane crash in which he was killed.)

We continued to correspond, and I continued to see him whenever I went to Europe. In some ways, it was easier to consider him a friend when I was no longer his editor, and I suspect the same was true for him.

I had thought of Graham as old when I was sixteen, but the last time I saw him, in the late eighties, he really *was* old, his eyes an icy blue, so pale that he seemed almost blind, and his face puffy where it had once been gaunt. In his last letter to me, he said that he was well "except for the incurable disease of age."

He never did win the Nobel Prize. ♦

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THE NEW AMERICANS

Juan Guerrero's parents are farmworkers and labor unionists who came to this country from Mexico seeking a better life for their children. So why are Juan and his friends falling into a lawless, dangerous world?

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

WHEN I was Juan Guerrero's age, I thought Mexico was cool. It was the wild place, where we camped on the beach, bought beer without hassles, and howled at a foreign moon. Juan, who is twenty, was born in Zacatecas, in central Mexico, but grew up in Sunnyside, Washington. He does not think Mexico is cool. "Their roads are ugly," he says. "Their houses are made out of mud or chalk or something, and a lot of them are falling down. Their food is weird. They don't have corn dogs, they don't have pizza. In fact, there are no real stores or restaurants. The stores and restaurants are just, like, *in the houses.*" When Juan and his friends want to get wild, want to escape adult supervision, want to drink, they go out in the country around Sunnyside, gathering in old barns and abandoned homesteads, just as rural and small-town American kids have done forever. That's their Mexico, you might say.

Juan has been startling me—with loyalties and a temperament both enigmatic and terribly familiar—since the day we met, in early 1994. On that occasion, I had gone to his house to see his parents, Rosa and Rafael, whose own judgment about the relative coolness of Mexico seems to have been rendered in 1977, when, as a young married couple in Tacoaleche, a farm town in Zacatecas, they packed up their two small children and left everything they knew, hoping to find, in their words, *una vida mejor*—a better life—in America. Poor and barely educated, the Guerreros crossed the border on tourist visas and found jobs on a grape farm near Sunnyside, which is a town of about eleven thousand in the

Yakima Valley, a rich farm belt in central Washington less than two hundred miles from the Canadian border. Nineteen years have passed, and they are still working on the grape farm. Not long ago, they became United States citizens. I first went to see the Guerreros because they are members of the United Farm Workers of Washington State, a union that was founded in 1987 and was waging a bitter organizing struggle at a group of farms, including the one where the Guerreros work, that are owned by the Chateau Ste. Michelle winery.

When I arrived at their house—a small stuccoed three-bedroom on a wide, sun-bleached street in Sunnyside—they were just getting home from work. Juan, who was then eighteen and was also working at Chateau Ste. Michelle, trudged silently from the car into the back of the house. His parents, in boots and dusty jeans, gave me shy smiles and three-part solidarity handshakes, complete with light knuckle punches. We sat drinking Cokes in their living room, surrounded by family photographs—Juan is the second of four kids—and artificial flowers in hanging baskets.

Rosa and Rafael are both copper-colored, sun-weathered, broad-faced, compactly built. That evening, they looked slightly glassy-eyed from exhaustion, but they politely answered my questions with long, carefully phrased narratives. Their most pressing problem at work, they said, was a new type of shears that *la compañía* had given them for pruning. These shears were damaging their hands, they said, and they were afraid they might eventually be crippled. The union provided a channel for resolving such problems, but what they really wanted was a contract, reached through collective bargaining.

"We only want what the whites have," Rafael said quietly, referring to the Anglos who work inside the Chateau Ste. Michelle buildings, and who belong to the Teamsters. "Normal benefits, job security, an end to discrimination, dignity."

According to the Guerreros, Chateau Ste. Michelle, which is owned by UST Inc.—a holding company whose most profitable subsidiary is the United States Tobacco Company—had been bringing ever more sophisticated tactics, including "consultants" from California, to bear on the union and its members. Here were workers, I thought, locked in a struggle as old as serfdom, and it was their bad luck that it happened to be taking place in the capital-triumphant nineteen-nineties.

Juan emerged, freshly showered, in a clean T-shirt and baggy pants. His parents excused themselves and went to wash up. I asked Juan how he liked working at Chateau Ste. Michelle.

He looked at me as if I were crazy. "It sucks," he said. Throwing himself onto a kitchen chair, he looked past me at the television, where his two younger brothers were watching Snoop Doggy Dogg strut and threaten on MTV. Juan is several inches taller than his parents, and has a radically different affect. Where they are plainly from campesino backgrounds, and their manners are forthright and stolid, he has a lean, liquid grace and a distinctly ironic presence. They speak only Spanish; his English has no Spanish accent. He has an open, intelligent, stunningly handsome face, a chipped front tooth, and five earrings. He usually wears his hair, which is bleached faintly henna-colored on top, in the sort of chopped-off bowl cut that I associate with undergraduates devoted to the Pre-Raphaelites.

I asked him about the farmworkers' union.

"I don't know anything about it," he said. "When I get to work, I just—" He mimed pulling a pair of tiny headphones delicately over his ears. "I put on the Walkman, and that's it. I don't talk to anybody, and people don't talk to me. They're like, 'Why don't you talk?' But it's just not my scene. They're all like old people. It's just not me."

John Steinbeck had prepared me for Rafael and Rosa, but he hadn't prepared me for Juan. I asked what he listened to on his Walkman.

"Nirvana. Smashing Pumpkins. Pearl Jam. Alternative, techno, some rap."

A beeper went off, and Juan pulled it from his pocket and checked the number displayed. Then he turned and studied me, cocking his head, seeming to take me in for the first time. "You really from New York?" he asked.

I had come to the Guerreros' to talk about union politics and tactics. Instead, I found myself discussing Kurt Cobain, snowboarding, and the relative excitements of teen-age life in Sunnyside and in New York City. This was actually fine with me, for Juan struck me instantly as a kind of strange, laconic messenger from the future. I wanted to know more about him and about the news he brought. And, in the course of a number of trips I ended up making to the Yakima Valley, the curiosity seemed to be mutual.

In a sense, what I wanted to know was simply whether the Guerreros had found *una vida mejor* for themselves and their children in America. But I also hoped to learn something about how this country is absorbing the vast tide of Mexicans (and other Latinos) which is currently flowing north. In the Yakima Valley, which has been starkly dependent on Mexican labor for fifty years, twenty thousand undocumented immigrants, including the Guerreros, took advantage of a 1986 amnesty and got green cards, and an equally large number of migrant farmworkers decided to "settle out" there. Latinos in general have, of course, been doing the same thing all over the country, and their numbers are exploding. They already constitute more than ten per cent of the United States population, and will soon be this country's largest minority, outnumbering African-Americans. The great bulk of these millions of new immigrants are unlikely ever to return to their homelands in Latin America. After all, the roads down there, as Juan points out, are ugly.

JUAN'S parents, I discovered, were worried about him. They were no more enthusiastic about his working in the fields than he was; it was not the future they had foreseen for him. But Juan had started getting into trouble, mainly for fighting, in his early teens, and after a spell in juvenile detention he had finally been kicked out of school. The job in the fields was a stopgap, it was hoped, until he could resume his studies. In the meantime, the Guerreros seemed a bit stunned by the variety of perils that raising kids in El Norte had turned out to include. As I got to know more about Juan's life and times, I was a bit stunned myself. Juan, for his part, managed to seem spectacu-

Opposite: Juan Guerrero grew up in Sunnyside, in the Yakima Valley, which is home to youth gangs and drug trafficking. "This must look like a normal town to you," Juan said. "But it's not. It's really totally weird." Photographs by Mary Ellen Mark.

larly casual about almost anything that happened. To him, of course, his life was normal.

Hanging out with Juan meant hanging out with Mary Ann Ramirez. The two were inseparable.

"Juan and I have the same thoughts," Mary Ann told me. "We think *exactly alike*, and everybody else thinks we're weird, but we're not. They'll all be like tired or drunk, or whatever, and we'll just be talking, talking, talking. Last night, we talked almost all night."

"Almost," Juan confirmed.

The three of us were driving around Sunnyside in my rental car. Hanging out with Juan and his friends also meant a lot of aimless cruising. "Did you hear that guy at that party last night say he was from L.A.?" Juan asked Mary Ann. "Everybody who comes up here says they're from L.A."

"And you're supposed to be impressed!" Mary Ann shouted. "Did you hear what Cuco said?"

"About us being little rockers? Little snowboarders?"

"Yeah!"

I was keeping a list, which was swiftly growing, of local youth insults. Now I added "rockers" and "snowboarders." I had met Cuco Zesati. He was a burly junior at a local "alternative" high school—the place where students with discipline problems at the regular school were sent—and was a close friend of Juan's.

"He just doesn't like our hair," Juan said.

"Almost all Juan's friends have the same hair," Mary Ann informed me. I had met enough of Juan's buddies by then to know what she meant. "But Juan has the best!"

Mary Ann's speaking voice—at least, when she is feeling pleased with life—is an ebullient shout. She is fair-skinned, fine-boned, and extremely pretty, with a full head of long brown hair and a ton of nervous energy. Although she was born in Sunnyside, she has lived in many places—in Seattle, Texas, Germany (a stepfather in the military)—so that her speech is full of tramontane expressions like "y'all" and "fixin' to git." She is the same age as Juan and, like him, has no Spanish accent. Her career plan, she told me, after I asked, was to become either a psychotherapist or, failing that, a prison guard.

"Did Juan tell you we're going to Alaska this summer?"

"No."

"We are! Ten of us are going. We're going to work in a fish cannery. Make mass cash. It's gonna be fun, dude!" She punched Juan in the shoulder.

"Yeah," he drawled. "It is."

Juan and Mary Ann made a striking couple. Mary Ann insisted, however, that they were not one. As she put it to me, "Everybody thinks we're boning each other, but we're not."

I didn't say so, but I could see how everybody might get that idea.

"We're just friends," Mary Ann protested.

"Yeah," Juan said, unconvincingly. "She's just like one of the guys."

"These other girls just can't stand it that I like to kick it with Juan and his friends."

Mary Ann and Juan were constantly spotting friends, enemies, and telltale combinations of other teen-agers as we cruised. Downtown Sunnyside consists of a dozen low-rise blocks of modest shops and offices. Most of the commercial (and teen-age social) action is out along the Yakima Valley Highway, on the north side of town, where a strip with a couple of shopping malls, a K mart, a new Wal-Mart, and a complete collection of fast-food outlets straggles along for several miles. To my eye, it was a generic American setting, but to Juan and Mary Ann it was home: dense and full of drama. Off in the western distance stood Mt. Adams, a twelve-thousand-foot glacier-covered peak in the Cascades.

But Mary Ann's freedom to cruise was about to be curtailed, for the moment, by maternal responsibilities. It seemed that her mother was home looking after Mary Ann's baby daughter, Victoria, and that Mary Ann was obliged to relieve her. Victoria, I was told, had been born in Texas when Mary Ann was living there with an older sister. She did not marry the baby's father. "He was no help," Mary Ann said simply, when I asked. "All he wanted to do was party out."

As we drove her home, Mary Ann said, "I just hope Victoria doesn't look like a little wab." I had already discovered that "wab"—short for "wetback"—was the single most popular local youth insult. "Whenever my mom has Victoria for more than a couple of hours, she's totally wabbed out—ribbons everywhere, little sandals, frilly socks. Not the frilly socks!"

We dropped Mary Ann at her mother's house.

As we drove away, Juan turned to study a police car parked outside a convenience store. Then he sank back into his seat and sighed. "This must look like a normal town to you," he said. "But it's not. It's really totally weird."

A SIGN on the highway describes Sunnyside as the "Home of the Astronaut Bonnie Dunbar," and the members of its city council have nearly the same pale, middle-American cast they had at the turn of the century. And yet Sunnyside today has a substantial Latino majority. Much of the Yakima Valley follows the same pattern—of separate worlds interacting as little as possible. The newest immigrants retain, naturally, the closest ties to Mexico. A Spanish-language soccer league, with teams named after the players' home villages in Michoacán or Jalisco or Oaxaca, plays year-round. When the leftist politician Cuahutemoc Cárdenas, who nearly won the Presidency of Mexico in 1988, visited the United States in 1990, he came to the valley to see his constituents. If valley residents can't afford (or don't trust) doctors or pharmacies, many patronize *curanderos* (traditional healers) and buy prescription drugs (illegally) at the *botánica*, the same way they did (legally) in Mexico.

Though the great majority of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the valley are poor and uneducated, a few have made the trek from the fields into the middle class. Myrna Contreras-Trejo, for instance, a lawyer and a judge pro tem—the first Latina to hold this job in the Yakima Valley—spent her early years on the road with her family, who were migrant farmworkers until they settled out in the valley. Contreras-Trejo's high-school counsellor advised her to become a secretary, and she was still in the fields picking grapes two days before she left for the University of Washington.

Many Anglos openly resent the new arrivals. While white poverty in the valley is rare, many whites believe that the Mexicans either are taking jobs that are rightfully theirs or are bankrupting local government by going on public assistance, or both. Contreras-Trejo told me, "The prevailing attitude still is 'You should pick the apples, cut the asparagus, and get out of here—go back where you came from.' "

In the late nineteen-eighties, the Yakima Valley gained a reputation as a regional drug-trafficking center. Many Anglos blame their Mexican neighbors for this, too; and the trade routes for cocaine (from South America) and black-tar heroin (from Mexico) that pass through the valley do follow the migration routes of Mexican farmworkers. Family-based Mexican smuggling organizations control the bulk of the trade, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the valley serves as a distribution center for a vast area that includes Seattle, Spokane, western Canada, Idaho, and Montana. Though much of the river of drug cash seems to flow back to Mexico, a fraction stays in the valley—mainly in the pockets of local lawyers, such as George Trejo, Contreras-Trejo's husband. He is a successful criminal defense attorney who specializes in drug cases.

The drug trade in the valley is, considering its volume, relatively peaceful—more so, anyway, than in most American cities. There is, however, a startling amount of urban-style violent crime unrelated to drugs: murder, robbery, drive-by shootings. Many Anglos, once again, blame immigration from Mexico for the violence. As it happens, many Latinos do the same; that is, a shockingly high percentage of the region's violent crime is committed by youths—a couple of years ago, Yakima County may have been the only place in the country where more juveniles than adults were indicted for murder—and most of those youths are Latinos. And Latino adults, who tend to be at least as unhappy as their Anglo neighbors about youth crime, say that little or none of it would have happened back in Mexico.

The worst crime in recent memory was the 1993 slaughter of an Anglo family of four in their rural home, near Sunnyside. Two boys, Miguel Gaitan and Joel Ramos, each fourteen years old, were convicted of those murders. The boys told authorities that they had intended only to rob the house, but those close to the case all had something to say, I found, about the boys' apparent desire to impress the leaders of a youth gang in Sunnyside known as the Bell Gardens Locos.

Mary Ann Ramirez and her daughter, Victoria. Mary Ann wanted an education and a career, but says, "I just got into something completely different."

The Yakima Valley is home to dozens of youth gangs. Still a new phenomenon, the gangs are overwhelmingly Latino, and police blame them for most of the valley's youth crime. Though gang crimes rarely happen in schools, public concern became so great that in 1991 the Sunnyside School District decided to hire a "gang-awareness coördinator" named Donavon Vlieger. A former deputy sheriff from Los Angeles, Vlieger persuaded the school authorities that the only way to stop the growth of gangs was by dramatically confronting anybody who appeared to be involved in one. From all accounts, Vlieger took Sunnyside's junior-high and high schools by storm. He stunned those students who were, in his opinion, "gang-involved" with extravagant verbal abuse. He advocated suspension and expulsion for suspected gang members, and such punishments quickly became the norm.

One of the boys Vlieger suspected—and ultimately succeeded in having banned from Sunnyside High—was Juan Guerrero.

I ATTENDED one of Don Vlieger's "gang-awareness seminars" for teachers and school administrators. It was held in the East Valley Middle School, forty miles up the valley from Sunnyside. The atmosphere was strangely boisterous, as if the thirty-odd teachers were looking forward to being entertained. Vlieger did not disappoint them. Trim, blond, in his mid-thirties, with a thick brown mustache in a vulpine face, he had a showman's élan: snappy but relaxed, folksy but vaguely glamorous, in the Southern California law-enforcement style. This was clearly a presentation he had made many, many times.

After some jokey opening remarks, Vlieger showed a video about gangs in Los Angeles. According to the video, there are five types of gangs in L.A. The "Latin" gangs are the biggest, and have three distinguishing features: they are "turf-oriented," "superstitious Catholics," and "big on machismo." Black gangs, by contrast, are primarily about money. Asian gangs exist, even though "the Asian people are law-abiding." Then, there are white gangs, whose specialties are drugs and gay-bashing. And, finally, there are "stoner" gangs, who smoke marijuana, take LSD, and practice Satanism.

The gang problem in the Yakima Valley has its roots in Southern California, Vlieger said. The connection is clear throughout the Pacific Northwest, where the names of certain tough Los Angeles neighborhoods—Hawaiian Gardens, Bell Gardens—are incongruously popu-

"Everybody on the bus today was played by Anthony Hopkins."

lar as gang names. The great dividing line between Latino gangs in California, between *Sureños* (southerners, traditionally from south of Bakersfield, with heraldic attachments to the number thirteen, the color blue, and the letter "M") and *Norteños* (northerners, from north of Bakersfield, claiming the number fourteen, the color red, and the letter "N"), also divides the Yakima Valley gangs into opposed camps.

Vlieger had some logical-sounding things to say about the appeal of gangs. "Gangs are how kids gain power over their environment, which is a basic need we all have," he told the teachers. "They're also fun, they're exciting. And, contrary to popular belief, gangsters don't have low self-esteem. They are into a *powerful* behavior. They feel *great* about themselves. How else can a twelve-year-old walk down the street and make adults scatter?"

His condemnation of gangs was, however, unequivocal. "Gangs are the worst thing a kid can get into, worse than drugs," he said. "Gangsters don't graduate, druggies sometimes do. A gang is a negative social group. It destroys members and communities, it produces sorrow and pain. It's antisocial behavior with a support group. If you're a gang member, going to jail gives you prestige. It means you went down for the set. Jail means exactly the opposite of what it would mean for me and you. Gangs have a humiliating, medieval approach to women. Girls who want to get jumped into a gang are often required to pull a train. I don't need to tell you what that means."

The East Valley Middle School staff seemed rapt. Mostly women, nearly all Anglo, they listened carefully, and tittered grimly at the occasional sarcasm.

"Here in the valley, you're never going to have a metropolitan gang issue," Vlieger told them. "You'll have a rural gang issue. It will be different. More crimes will be solved. But it's going to be just as violent."

There was much they could do, Vlieger assured the teachers. "The first thing is to watch the attitude," he said. "It's a way of life, it's a way of thinking. It's also a way of dressing. It's khakis, it's Dickies, it's web belts, it's bandannas, it's colors, it's people dressed all in black. We take photos of clothing, and we show the photos to parents. We say, 'Take a little time, because your child is at risk for losing their school experience.' Some parents get the message and take action before it's too late. But we can't save the troublemakers. We need to take care of the compliant kids first."

A chorus of agreement rose from the teachers, including a cry of "Hear! Hear!"

Vlieger went on, "We can deal with the noncompliant with whatever time and resources we have left. You can't put healthy people with sick people and expect the sick to get better."

Vlieger showed examples of items that could be confiscated as evidence of gang affiliation. There was a school notebook with writing in "Gothic script" on it, and a T-shirt, promoting a magazine called *Teen Angels*, that was covered with a lush drawing of soulful *cholos* (Chicano hoodlums) and worshipful women. It seemed clear to me as I watched the teachers paw disapprovingly through the goods that what we had here was one culture (Anglo, adult) trying to forbid the imagery of another (Latino, young).

East Valley Middle School is, incidentally, eighty-five per cent Anglo. According to its principal, whom I talked to after the Vlieger show, the school has no gang problem. Some of its students are "stoners," she said, who smoke marijuana and take LSD and speed, and every now and then she sees a bit of graffiti.

I later caught up with Vlieger back in Sunnyside—in his office, at Harrison Middle School. He described his work in Sunnyside as a success. "We've quit the 'poor kids' syndrome," he told me. "We now tell them what we expect from them, and we remove those kids who give us trouble. It's an anxiety shift, from administrators to kids."

Chico Rodriguez, Jr., a Sunnyside High alumnus in his mid-twenties, who was Vlieger's assistant, vigorously endorsed everything his boss said.

"I used to carry around a big pill to my presentations," Vlieger went on. "And I used to tell people, 'It's big. It's going to hurt going down. But take it or you're going to die.' "

A teacher, a middle-aged white woman, came in with a tiny tin-and-cardboard spinner—the sort of thing you might find in a box of Cracker Jack. Was it gang-related? Vlieger turned the toy over a couple of times and showed it to Rodriguez. Both shook their heads. Nah. The teacher left.

A bell rang, and the halls outside filled with children, most of them Latino. Barely a third of the students in Sunnyside's public schools are Anglo; in recent years, many of the town's white children have been transferred to private schools. The Sunnyside Christian School, for example, has increased its enrollment by forty-four per cent since 1985. It has few—very few—Latino students, and sends at least eighty per cent of its students on to four-year colleges. Meanwhile, Sunnyside High School sends perhaps twenty per cent of its students on to four-year colleges.

Don Vlieger does not live in Sunnyside—"I never police the town I live in"—but he does have extensive business interests there. Thus the fact that youth gangs continue to thrive in the town, if not in the schools, concerns him financially. "If Sunnyside doesn't beat the gang issue, the economy will deteriorate. People don't want to live where they don't feel safe, and that hurts property values. Sunnyside is small enough so that it *can* beat the gang issue. But the police have no dedicated anti-gang resources—not yet. We're working on that."

I asked Vlieger about Juan Guerrero.

He snorted. "Juan's crazy," he said. "The look in his eyes. He's violent. He's intelligent. A bad prognosis."

Some time later, I talked to Chico Rodriguez, Jr.—whose father is a Sunnyside police officer—without Don Vlieger present, and I found he was careful to distinguish his own approach to the students from Vlieger's. "I try to be more subtle," he said. "I don't disrespect them. I don't get in their faces and tell them they're trash and puke."

"HE was crazy," Juan said when I asked him about Vlieger. "He called me into his office and said he saw me downtown. He said I was throwing gang signs at him, threatening his life. I didn't even remember seeing Vlieger downtown. But he didn't want to hear that. He just kept calling me all these names. It was almost like he wanted to fight."

Juan's younger brother Rafael, Jr., who is fifteen, has a terse analysis of Juan's history of problems with authority. "He smirks," Rafael, Jr., says. Ralph, as Juan calls him—and as he prefers to be called—is a calm, shy, heavyset boy. He went on, "Juan's problem is he giggles, and people don't like it."

Others said the same thing. Cuco, of the alternative high school, said, "Juan laughs at people. He don't give them no respect. That's why they all go crazy and want to fight him and expel him from school."

Juan does not look like a fighter. He isn't stocky or heavily muscled or scarred. In high school, he ran cross-country, a sport that seemed to suit his build. And yet he also studied Tae Kwon Do from an early age, earning his black belt at fourteen, and he has a formidable local reputation, not just in Sunnyside but among teen-agers throughout the valley, as a street fighter. "For some reason, he really knows how to throw his things," a friend of his named Saul Zaragoza told me.

I asked Mary Ann Ramirez about Juan's fighting, and she said, "You know, it's unbelievable. Everywhere we go, Juan has beaten somebody up—at least one person in every group, at every party. I hate it! I mean, it doesn't impress me none that he can fight good. What it means is that we can't go anywhere without somebody calling him on. It sucks!"

Juan shrugged when I asked him about it. "Yeah, I been in a lot of fights, and I usually win," he said. "But I say let's forget about fighting, let's go out and do some other fun activities."

Mary Ann said, "Juan's not that big, but he's strong, and he's really, really fast. Plus he knows all the karate high kicks. I saw him fight a guy named Roy at Safeway two weeks ago. Roy was beating up a friend of Juan's, and it made Juan mad. So he ran right at them, and he jumped up so fast and so high and he hit Roy, who's really tall, right in the chest with both feet. It was awesome! The fight was over, just like that. The cops came, and Juan got a ticket. Nobody else got one. But that's how it is. Everybody's like 'Yeah, yeah, Juan, beat him up!' But when he's going to jail nobody's like 'Hey, take me with you!' "

Juan has been charged with more misdemeanors related to fighting than he can count. When he was seventeen, he pleaded guilty to second-degree assault, a felony, and was sent to a youth camp in western Washington for five months. He subsequently spent five months in a group home in Richland, thirty-five miles east of Sunnyside.

His incarceration was a great blow to his parents. Their shame, sadness, and frantic concern did not stop them from questioning the treatment Juan received, however. "Juan is no angel," Rosa told me. "But he didn't do all the things the police said he did."

Rafael said, "Even though I can't con-

"I just got here—which gender are we bashing?"

vince him about what he should do and shouldn't do, I understand Juan. Why? Because I was like him when I was his age. My friends and I got in a lot of fights. The difference was that the police didn't watch us so closely. They weren't afraid of us, and they didn't arrest us for every little thing. There is a lot of discrimination here in Sunnyside. Even in Mexico, where the rich *hate* the poor, we didn't have discrimination like this."

Juan does not carry the marks of his time in detention any more visibly than the traces of his brawling. "Being locked up was weird," he told me. "It's like the whole world has stopped. There's a lot of fighting, especially on weekends. Most of it's racial. Like this black guy called me a spic in the forest. I said, 'Call me that again and I'll kick your ass.' And he did, so I kicked his ass. Another Mexican guy helped me. Later on, that black guy and I got to be friends. But some of the whites in there were K.K.K. There weren't enough of them to do what they wanted to do. They'd just say 'White power,' just to rub your face in it." Juan looked at me wryly.

When he got home from Richland, in late 1993, he was barred from returning to Sunnyside High. Although he had been attending public high school without incident while he was living in the group home in Richland, the fact that he was now eighteen gave the Sunnyside High authorities broad powers to bar his enrollment. Teana Robbins, Juan's parole officer, argued for his reinstatement. Don Vlieger, she recalls, led the charge against it. Bob Thomas, who was then the school's vice-principal (he is now the principal), was also against it. "He was considered dangerous," Thomas told me. "His presence on campus. You could feel it in the air."

Later, Thomas added, "He's a good-looking kid, and he seemed better educated than most that are involved. And his parents were pretty active in trying to get him back in. But the Guerreros were the type of parents who scream discrimination. It's a type of parent, and kids who are raised in that environment tend to have problems."

Within weeks of the decision to keep him out of school, Juan was in the grape fields, under his Walkman, working alongside his parents. His plan, once he got a general-equivalency diploma through an adult-education center in Sunnyside, was to start community college in Yakima. A bunch of his friends, including Mary Ann, had the same plan. They were going to get a house in Yakima, and part-time jobs, and be roommates. "After Alaska, when we'll have a bunch of money saved up," Mary Ann told me, adding, "It'll be great! Right, dude?"

"Right," Juan said. "No doubt about it."

JUAN, *pace* Don Vlieger, scorns gangs. When he was in junior high, he briefly thought they were cool, and he joined a schoolboy gang called the Little Valley Locos. But the kitschy ritualism, the romanticism, the heavily Chicano atmosphere of *cholo* gang style were a poor fit for the ironic individualist whose favorite musician by the time he got to high school was Kurt Cobain. Juan left the L.V. L.s, as they are known, after only a short association.

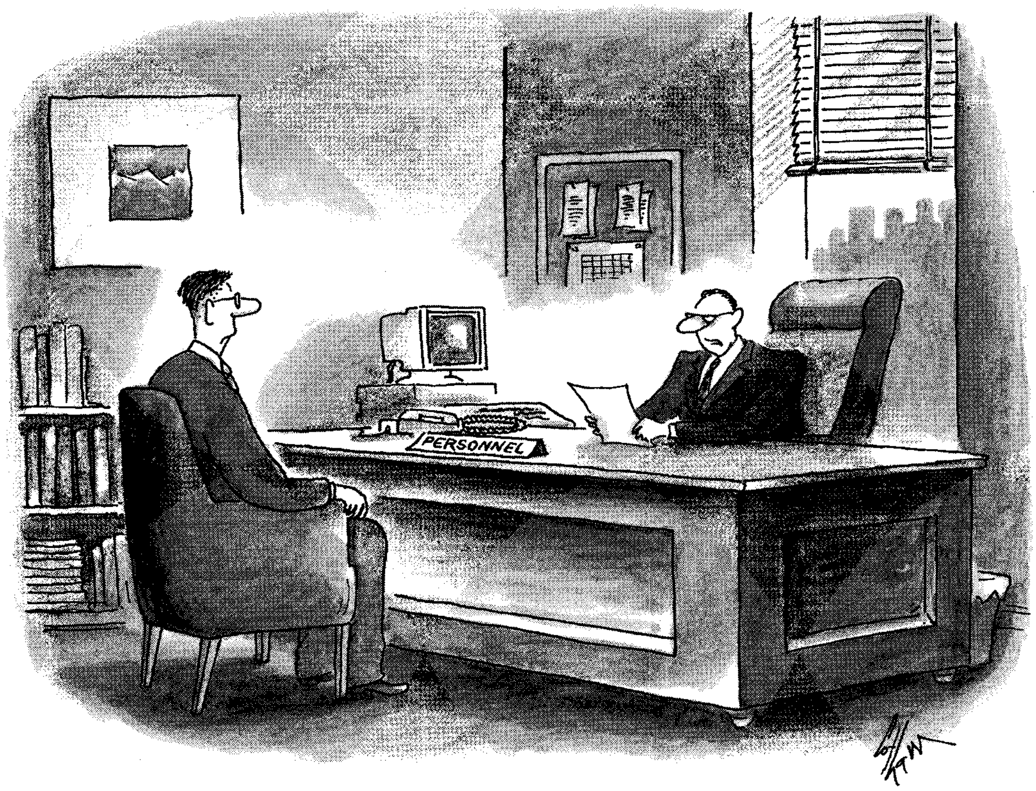
Curious about the Sunnyside gang world, I spent a little time with what passes for the L.V. L. high command—a pack of attitudinous teen-age brothers named Flores. Their father, Victor, is a squat Chicano from California and a *veterano*—a gang member of an earlier generation. He drives a small, heavily modified truck—lowered to the ground and with the roof sawed away. He and his wife work in the fields, speak English together, and have a tidy little house in Sunnyside. Their boys sleep in the basement, which has its own entrance and feels like a clubhouse.

The first time I stopped by the Flores basement, I spent an hour talking to Victor, Jr., who was then eighteen. Stocky, like his father, he pointedly avoided meeting my eye. Instead, he sat at a tiny desk in a corner of the basement, hunched intently over my business card with a pen, covering it with elaborate script. The walls above the desk were papered with gang-style art.

"New York?" Victor, Jr., said, finally. He drew down his mouth. "I like to move to the city."

"Why's that?"

"Easier to do crimes there." He drew his mouth down farther. Victor, Jr., has a peculiar, extremely powerful-looking jaw—it looks as if it belongs on somebody twice his age and twice his size—and an expressive mouth, which he draws down to droll effect. Furiously "tagging" my card, he looked,



"And you can assure me that you're right in the head now?"

at the same time, about eight years old. "They got a lot of killers there," he went on. "And stripping bars. You ever been to a stripping bar?"

He gave me a mischievous glance, then returned to his work. Victor, Jr.,'s nickname is Camel, conferred for his strong resemblance to the cigarette-ad character Joe Camel.

Camel's younger brother Lee, who looked about fifteen, emerged from the shadows of the basement, yawning. He stared at me as he stumbled past. It was nearly midday, so I asked him why he wasn't in school. He muttered something and went upstairs.

Camel snickered. "He ain't been to school for two years."

"What's he doing?"

"Chillin'. Kickin' back. Doin' tattoos."

Camel indicated a butterfly on his forearm. He had, for a teen-ager, an amazing number of tattoos. He was shirtless that day, and I could see at least half a dozen, including a rose on the back of a hand, "L.V. L." here and there, a huge "SUR," for *Sureño*, across his hairy belly, and a blue teardrop falling from his left eye.

There was doo-wop playing on a tape deck, so we talked a bit about music. I asked what kind he liked.

"Oldies," he said, gesturing toward the tape deck. "East L.A. stuff. Motown. Rap. *Corridos*—especially Chalino Sánchez."

Corridos are popular Mexican ballads, typically celebrating the exploits of cowboy drug runners in western and northern Mexico. Chalino Sánchez, who called himself El Bandido Generoso, wrote and sang great *corridos* until he was killed in Mexico, in 1992.

I asked Camel about a feud that the L.V. L.s had been having with the Bell Gardens Locos.

He sneered. "Them B.G.L.s been prank-calling my house," he said. "They're just a bunch of punks."

The feud was getting violent, I had heard. Knifings, drive-bys.

Camel shrugged. "It don't make no sense, because we're all *Sureños*," he said. He looked at me with a theatrical impassivity. "*Sureños hasta la muerte*," he said.

I asked about various people I had met around Sunnyside. Don Vlieger?

"Punk." Camel spat the word.

The principal of the high school?

"Punk."

The chief of police?

"Punk."

Juan Guerrero?

Camel paused, the plosive already on his lips. I was thinking about Juan's towering rep as a street fighter, and figured that Camel was thinking the same thing. Finally, he said, "Prep."

That was it, exactly, I thought. Juan might not look preppy to the Sunnyside school system or the police or Don Vlieger, but from Camel's end of the telescope he was strictly from J. Press. Juan scorned the subcultural refuge of gang life; he was bored by its florid, dead-end ethnicity. He cared little for La Raza and was not prepared to turn his back on the wider world. "He ain't down," Camel said gruffly. Indeed, no one who knows Juan well seems able to picture him "claiming a *cliqua*"—being "down for the set."

The reasons have to do partly with class. Most of Juan's close buddies—Saul Zaragoza, Richard Negrete, Junior Salazar, Aaron De La Cruz, Joaquin Rodriguez—come, as he does, from solid homes, have parents with jobs, speak English well. None of them have uncles doing time in state prison. (Camel has two.) They can all walk the mainstream American walk to an extent that few Latino gang-bangers, as they are called, can. "Juan and his buddies know how to behave appropriately," Teana Robbins, the parole officer, told me. "They handle stressful situations pretty well. Besides that, they're awesome athletes. They fight, just like the gangs, except they always win, because they're in shape. These other guys are heavy drinkers, heavy dopers, fools—kids who will almost surely be career criminals."

But even as Juan steers clear of formal affiliations, either with a gang or with organized (as in school) sports, his misadventures force a collective identity on him. In jail, for example, he becomes a nationalist. "That's when you need some other Mexicans," he says. "So in there I'm like 'Yeah, I'm *Mexican*,' but out here it's like 'Who cares?' In there, some guy paints a Mexican flag and I'm like 'All *right*.' But out here I don't have any real strong feelings about it."

The street-fighting life also creates strong group identifications. Thus Juan knows his friends primarily as those who will back him up in a beef. He and Cuco, for instance, have been fighting side by side since they were little kids. "Juan is the only person I know that will never leave me stranded," Cuco told me. "We been in so much stuff together, and he's *always* got my back." Cuco's scorn for snowboarders—and his preference for a sort of rockabilly haircut—do not seem to affect this bond.

Juan, when he is asked how he defines himself, shrugs and says that he is indeed a snowboarder. Snowboarding, like its close cousin downhill skiing, is not cheap to pursue, so Juan and his friends actually spend a limited amount of time at the various ski areas north and west of Sunnyside. But snowboarding is not simply a sport. It is an attitude, an argot, a look. That look is grunge, basically, with some gymnastic, speed-demon undertones. And while snowboarders bear a vague resemblance, with their baggy plaid shirts and baggy khaki pants, to traditional Chicano *cholos*, the two sensibilities are culturally worlds apart. Snowboarders are descended from surfers and skiers, from Austrian outdoorsmen and Okie hedonists, while *cholos* come from Pancho Villa, from Latin notions of honor and manhood, from *el barrio* and *la familia* and jail.

As Juan and I sit discussing these matters in his parents' living room, his father stops in. It's a Saturday evening, and Rafael is dressed to the nines—long black leather rain slicker, white cowboy hat, fancy boots. He and Rosa are going to a dance tonight. After he departs, Juan says, "My mom and dad used to win dance contests at the Branding Iron, in Toppenish."

I ask Juan if he owns any Western clothes.

"Not even," he says, and laughs. "You mean like my dad? No way! It's not even me. I'm not saying it's never going to be me, but at the present time it's not. I can't even dance Spanish."

MARY ANN can't dance Spanish, either. "It's too *hard*," she says. "Too many different steps and styles. My mom tried to teach me, but I couldn't do it." Mary Ann's mother, who comes from Monterrey, has also tried, without success, to teach Mary Ann how to cook proper Mexican food. Mary Ann is not, however, a total washout on the Mexican-heritage front. "I speak Spanish really good," she says. "People say, 'You sound like a wetback!' " She also had a hell of a *quinceañera*—the traditional fifteenth-birthday bash for Mexican girls. "We rented a white limousine and kept it for thirteen hours," she says dreamily. "My dress cost twelve hundred dollars. The whole *quinceañera* cost fifteen thousand." Mary Ann shows me a photograph album of her *quinceañera*. "I felt like a queen," she says. But that party was a last gasp of affluence for her and her family. Reynaldo Hinojosa, the stepfather who footed the bills in those days, got busted for drug trafficking. Mary Ann's mother now visits him in a federal prison camp in Oregon.

Mary Ann lays down the album to attend to Victoria, who is fussing. We are in the tiny front room of Mary Ann's mother's house. Victoria is a bright-eyed baby, with coloring and hair from her father, who is half Korean, half black. Mary Ann, who is uncharacteristically subdued, settles Victoria face down across her lap. A previous stepfather, she says, took the family to Germany—a country she remembers as fantastically clean and calm, with amazing parks. After her mother divorced that husband, she took her daughters back to Seattle. There she worked as a nursing assistant and they lived in not so genteel poverty. Then, when Mary Ann was in the sixth grade, her mother met Hinojosa, who had a landscaping business in Seattle and a ranch near Brownsville, Texas. Hinojosa began to make big money in the drug trade, and he bought Mary Ann's mother a house in West Seattle. "He was like a real dad to us," Mary Ann recalls. "And it was so *nice* having all that money. We lived in a rich neighborhood. I went to a real nice school. My mom knew what my dad was doing. But she just told us, 'Look, I'm happy, and we're not living in the projects anymore.' "

After Hinojosa's arrest, Mary Ann and her mother moved back to Sunnyside. They still had the means to rent a good-sized house in a predominantly Anglo part of town. "I hung around with preps then," Mary Ann says. "White kids. We partied hard. I was only in the eighth grade, but I was already into drugs—coke, weed, alcohol." After a falling-out with her mother, Mary Ann went to Texas and moved in with her oldest sister. By the time she came back to Sunnyside, she had Victoria, and her mother had moved to a poorer, more Mexican part of town and was selling wedding

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

GRANDMOTHER, THE EMPRESS

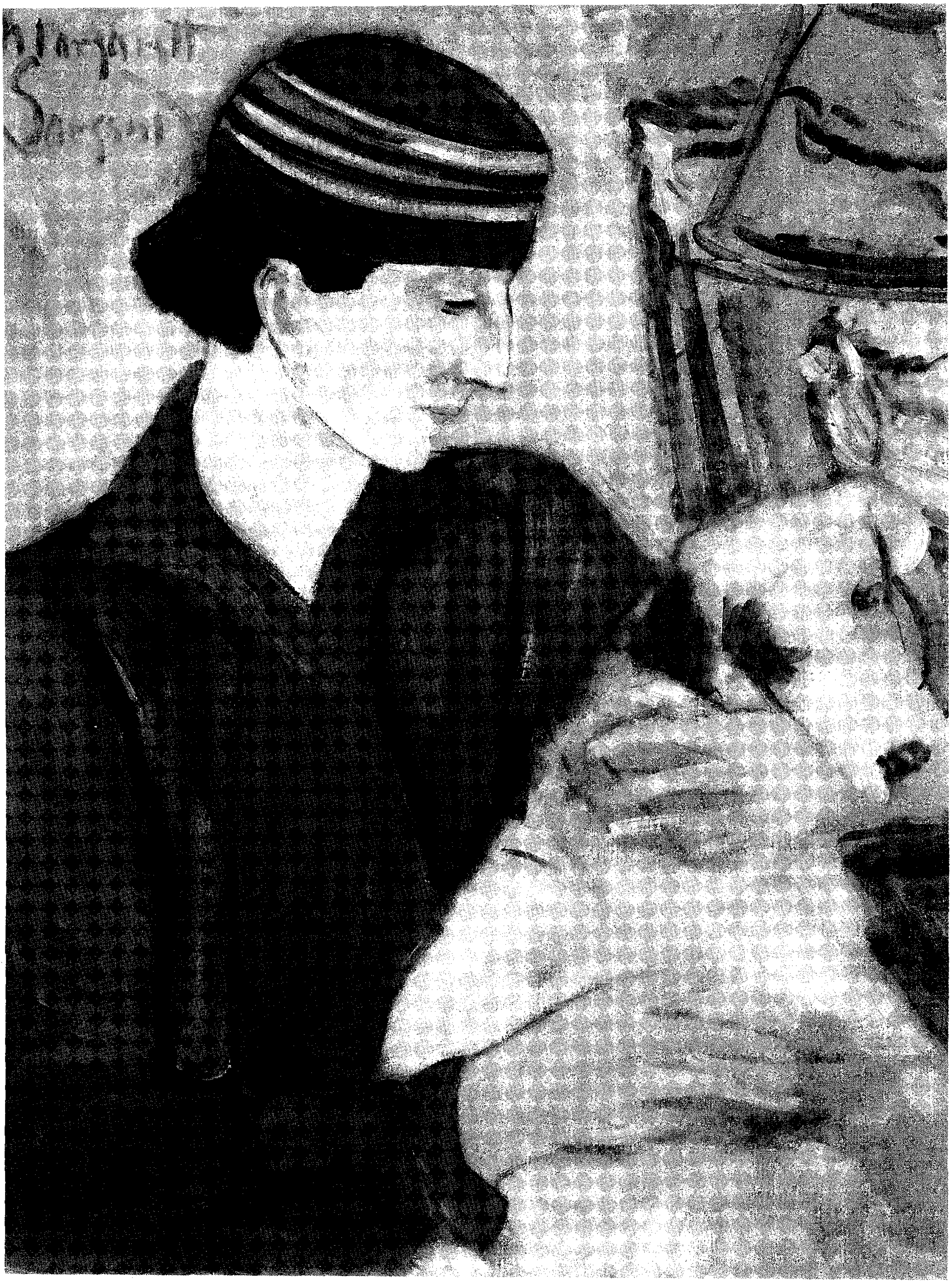
WHILE Margarett Sargent was alive, I knew her only as my grandmother, though she was always an unconventional one. At the end of her life, coiffed and bedridden, her face as porcelain as I imagined Empress Josephine's to have been, she held court in a room thickly hung with modernist paintings, high above the Boston Public Garden. As a child, I'd heard about her beauty, so legendary when she was young that an admirer's letter addressed only "Margarett Sargent, Boston" reached her easily. When I was eight, she turned up at her son's prenuptial dinner—her first encounter with the husband who'd divorced her for another woman—wearing black and wielding a satin cape that was magenta on one side, orange on the other. I was always told she was an artist, but there were none of her paintings in our house, so I thought the description must have something to do with why she sent me a green satin evening bag when I was eleven; her use of odd-colored inks; or her scandalous love affairs with both women and men. I used the fact that she was an artist to explain why my grandfather had divorced her, and why she bounced in and out of sanitariums.

When I was twenty-one, living in my first apartment and writing my first poems, I wrote to her asking for a painting. A crate arrived accompanied by a note in pink ink on hot-turquoise paper. When I lifted the lid, a woman's dazed face stared back. The shadow of a swoop of black hat smudged her pale forehead. What did it mean that my grandmother had painted this woman, whose eyes followed me everywhere in the room? I hung the painting, but I could barely look at it. As time passed, and I became a working poet, I took my grandmother's life as a warning: she'd stopped painting in her mid-forties; she'd spent years having shock treatments; she'd left a warehouse room full of moldering canvases and fragments of sculpture. I didn't want to end up that way.

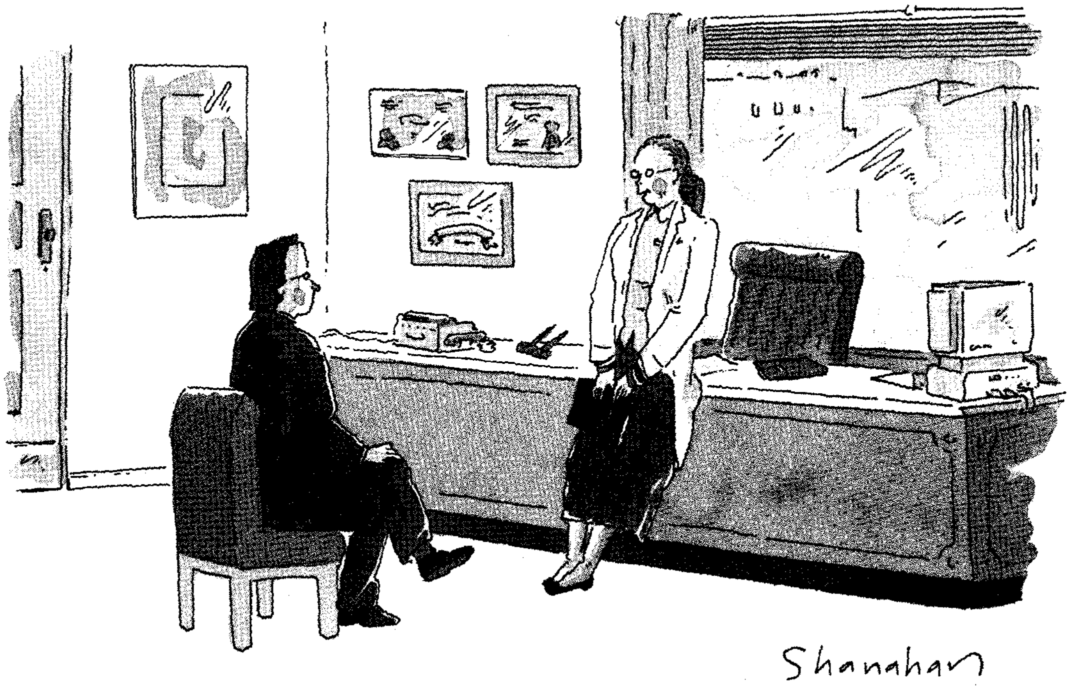
Some months after Margarett died, in 1978, an art-historian friend and I took a trip to the old warehouse in Cambridge, totally unprepared for what we would find. An ebullient, almost wild rage for color broke from the crowded, dusty racks. For five days, we lifted paintings into bright halogen light—photographing, measuring, scribbling descriptions. I was giddy and speechless. These paintings didn't square with the decorous life that Margarett Sargent was born to, but their angularity and disturbance made perfect sense of my Empress grandmother and her sexual past. "We've discovered an artist," my friend said.

MARGARETT SARGENT was born in 1892, into a life of winters on Commonwealth Avenue, springs and falls at her grandfather Hunnewell's estate in Wellesley. When she was eighteen, a year in Florence broke Boston's hold. She came home "crazy about Donatello" and, after a reign as the débutante of the year, turned aside an early engagement to become a sculptor. At twenty-seven, she talked her father into allowing her to live in New York. She and a friend took an apartment across from the Plaza; Fanny Brice lived downstairs. Margarett worked for Gutzon Borglum (who later sculpted Mt. Rushmore) and soon met the painter George Luks, of the Eight. "To hell with your hats," he said, and introduced her to a New York still reeling from the Armory Show. It was Luks who nicknamed her the White Blackbird. She had nine exhibitions of paintings and sculpture in six years—in New York, Boston, and Chicago—and then, just when she seemed about to be accepted on her own terms as an artist, she inexplicably ended her career.

What moves me now as I look at the paintings is how obstinately Margarett kept to her way of seeing. Perhaps most imaginatively, she painted pairs of women: two cooks in an exuberant card game; a woman arranging white plumes in another's dark hair. About her paintings, Margarett said very little, but one remark leaps from a 1930 interview: "I like arms and their movements, and striped blouses." —HONOR MOORE


Margarett Sargent

"The White Dog" (Maria deAcosta)," 1928, by Margarett Sargent. Her paintings didn't square with the decorous Boston life she was born to.



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accessories at a flea market. "My old friends, the preppies, are all walking now," she says. She means that they're graduating from high school. Mary Ann, who is studying for her G.E.D., sighs, and says, "I wish I was walking, mostly because of my mom."

Victoria is now asleep. On my way out, Mary Ann's mother stops me for a chat. She is an intense, attractive woman of about fifty. Our idle conversation about the craziness of kids these days turns suddenly emotional. Her eyes fill with tears, and her voice fills with anguish as she asks, "How can we teach them to work? How can we teach them to stay off welfare?"

MARY ANN'S mother's concern is well founded. Her two older daughters have both escaped the fields (where she worked as a girl) and are decently employed, both now in Seattle—one as a paralegal, the other as a store manager—but the dark spiral of downward mobility, of children growing up to find themselves worse off than their parents, of chronic unemployment and welfare dependency, today haunts Mexican immigrants as badly as it haunts any group in America. In fact, the Latino school-dropout rate, which is roughly fifty per cent, is higher than that of any other ethnic group. If present trends continue, fifty years from now, according to the journalist Earl Shorris's study "Latinos," there will be a "Latino underclass of enormous size"—perhaps twenty-five or thirty million souls.

Why Latinos are, on the whole, faring so poorly is a question with no simple answer. The category itself is actually too broad: Cuban exiles in south Florida, who are prospering, have little in common with illiterate Guatemalans in rural California. This diversity works against the accumulation of national political power, and so does the fact that Mexican-Americans, who are the largest national bloc among Latinos, have a poor record of voter registration and turnout. While millions of Latinos have entered the American middle class since the Second World War, their collective experience has in many ways remained fundamentally different from that of earlier immigrants from Europe. Most have retained close connections to their homelands, and, in the case of Mexicans, have often settled only a short distance from the border. Most have faced much more intense discrimination than the most despised white immigrants endured—discrimination that until the civil-rights revolution included formal racial segregation and denial of the vote. Above all, the great recent wave of poor Latino immigrants has poured into a postindustrial economy that has a limited demand for unskilled labor. The decline of American public education, most marked in poor and working-class neighborhoods, is brutally clear evidence that the ladder of upward mobility has lately been simply yanked out of the reach of millions of young people.

Whatever the causes, the age-old American immigrant's dream is clearly not working out for millions of Latinos. Even in little Sunnyside, far from the vast, bleak barrios of East Los Angeles, the pattern is stark. "The kids whose families have just come from Mexico are the best off," Deirdre Gamboa, a first-grade teacher in Sunnyside, told me. "Their families are stable. They're studious and well behaved. It's after they've been here awhile that the families start to fall apart. Not all of them, of course, but it really is consistent. The kids who have the most trouble have been here awhile. In so many cases, whether from drugs or alcohol, or whatever, child care just seems to break down."

Even the children of migrant workers, whose schooling is constantly interrupted and haplessly re-started, seem to thrive in comparison with the children of the not so recently arrived. There is another pattern, too: an earlier arc of upward mobility that carried bright Latinos of the baby-boom generation into the professions. Myrna Contreras-Trejo, the lawyer and judge, and Deirdre Gamboa's husband, Guadalupe, who is a labor lawyer, are two shining members of this cohort in the Yakima Valley. But it is a very small group, really. Of sixteen first-grade teachers at Deirdre Gamboa's school, she is the only one who speaks Spanish—and she is an Anglo from Canada. The school, meanwhile, is seventy per cent Latino. Deirdre Gamboa offers a succinct explanation for the consistent failure of the immigrant dream among her students. "I think the racism here begins to take a toll," she says. "People realize they're second-class citizens, and things start to fall apart."

Or, I think, if they're teen-agers they start to fall into gangs. Here Don Vlieger's gang typology seems apt: Latino gangs, urban or rural, do tend to be less about making money than they are about identity. Thus, while in many American communities impoverished teen-agers go in appalling numbers into the drug trade, where gangs are usually an integral part of doing business, in the Yakima Valley the two scenes are separate and distinct. The serious drug trade—"the business," as Juan and his friends call it—is effectively closed to disaffected youths of the sort who staff it elsewhere. "It's all wabs," according to Mary Ann. She means Mexicans, like her stepfather Hinojosa. "If you tried to pick up some of their business, even if you were in the biggest gang around here, they'd just kill you."

The county's criminal courts handle a steady traffic of low-level smugglers and dealers, many of them from Oaxaca and Michoacán. Typically, the defendants are tiny, dark-skinned young men, often illiterate, who speak no English. While these men are by no means representative of Mexican immigrants in the valley, they are the real-life denizens of the *corridos*—the hustling campesinos hoping to hit the jackpot and build themselves a narco palace back in Oaxaca. And in the minds of alarmed Anglos they get lumped together with Juan and Mary Ann and Juan's parents and Guadalupe Gamboa and every other Latino in sight under the heading of the valley's "Mexican problem."

But Juan and his friends confront, it seems to me, a quintessentially American problem, which is how to become Americans. The assimilation they face is a sloppy, complicated business, in which parents are, in the end, not much help. Juan's family has avoided, thanks in large measure to his parents' devotion to the farmworkers' struggle, the pattern of post-immigration implosion described by Deirdre Gamboa, but Juan's awe of authority has not been enhanced in the process. And while Mary Ann, for her part, may have survived her mother's serial marriages and her beloved stepfather's brief prosperity and long imprisonment with her dreams of becoming a psychotherapist (or a prison guard) intact, there is still nobody in her life with anything one could call a career. Assimilation is inevitable, really; the question is which of the many layers of America each of these kids will be able to join. The possibilities have to be both confusing and terrifying.

And so, in the meantime, Juan and his friends enjoy a highly American aimlessness. They cruise, eat junk food, work at dead-end jobs, watch rock videos, call each other on their beepers, raise a little hell.

On the whole, they seemed unimpressed with me. Indeed, they seemed to see me as something of a loser. I had, for example, no beeper. *Why not*? The most hapless kid in Sunnyside could afford to rent a beeper, to keep in touch with his buddies. What if my office wanted to talk to me? My cars were also alarmingly bland.

In their cars, I learned, seating arrangements were crucial. The car owner (or owner's offspring) drove, of course. The least desirable spot was the "bitch seat"—the middle position in the back. It was very difficult for a boy to look cool riding there, squeezed between two other boys. Girls didn't usually mind the bitch seat. Some of them even seemed to like it. Mary Ann was an exception. But then she acted more like a boy than like a girl. She took whatever seat she could grab, and she defended it. She drank as hard as the boys, and she did the same drugs, too.

When I first met Mary Ann and Juan, it was shortly after they had been sucking gasoline fumes out of a plastic bag until they fainted. "It was my idea to try it," Mary Ann said. "I thought it would be fun. But it's scary. I blacked out once and saw the world coming to an end. People said I kept going, 'The world's coming to an end, the world's coming to an end.' I'm never gonna do gas again."

"Me, neither," Juan said. "Too weird."

I commended their decision.

"But did you ever do stupid stuff like that when you were a kid?" Mary Ann asked me.

Oh, yes, I said. All too like it.

On a Saturday morning in early spring, Juan and Mary Ann and Ralph and I took off for the mountains in my rental car. "Boarding!" Mary Ann crowed. She started slam-dancing against Juan in the back seat. "I've wanted to try it forever!"

Juan and Mary Ann passed the miles discussing their friends. "Nick's started talking all black," I overheard Juan say. "He's, like, 'Yo, homeboy, wussup?' So people are, like, 'Yo, nigger, nothin'.' "

"Just so he doesn't get all into gold chains and shit," Mary Ann said. "The blacks in Texas, especially the drug dealers, are really into flashing their money. I'm glad people aren't into that here. It starts too many fights."

As we headed up into the mountains, I wondered what Juan's buddies who were "talking all black" made of his taste

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for the alpine-resort scene—whether they ever called him a coconut, meaning brown on the outside, white on the inside.

It was wall-to-wall Anglos when we arrived at the eponymous White Pass Ski Area. We rented snowboards—my treat—and fooled around for a while, with Juan showing the rest of us the basics. Coming down the mountain, Ralph and Mary Ann and I seemed to crash every few feet. Ralph, particularly, struggled. Juan instructed his brother while Mary Ann and I peer-counselled each other down the hill. She had excellent balance and, though she tended to scream when she picked up speed, took the hard falls without complaint. Now and then, small gangs of other snowboarders hurtled past, gnomish in their baggy, colorless outfits.

Ralph, exhausted, took a long break after lunch. Mary Ann, who tended to fall even more than I did, urged Juan and me to go on without her, and we ungallantly did so, taking run after run in deep snow east of the chairlift.

But we learned just how ungallant we had been only at the end of the day, when we reconvened and found Mary Ann propped on a bench at the rental-return counter with her leg in a splint. It seemed she had gone snowboarding alone and had wrenched her knee, had lain in the snow for an hour, and then had been carried on a sled to a clinic. The doctor had told her to get an X-ray when she got home: she had a possible hairline fracture. "But it don't hurt," she claimed cheerfully, "now I got this thing on it." We carried her to the car, and tried to make her comfortable in the back seat.

There was no slam-dancing in the back seat on the long ride home. There was, however, much cuddling, rustling, cooing, and giggling. The splinted leg did not seem to be an issue. Ralph, riding shotgun, slept nearly the whole way to Sunnyside. At one point, Mary Ann announced, "You got chick lips, you know that? Juan's got lips like a chick!"

"You got 'em, too," Juan said softly.

"Lucky us," Mary Ann murmured. "First we think the same. Now we got the same mouths."

WHO SHE WAS

She loved jumping on the trampoline.
Her nickname was Monkey.
She slipped her tongue in his mouth when they kissed.

She had a job in publishing. It was what
she most wanted after she got out of Vassar. The first
manuscript she acquired was "The Heidegger Cookbook,"
so you can imagine how her career took off from there.

She started liking sex soon after her husband left her.
He came back weekends and complied
with her bedtime wishes. A lawyer.
What did you expect? A Peace Corps
volunteer who went on to become
the editor of *Envy: The Magazine for You*?

Where did her anger come from? He wasn't sure
but it was how he knew she loved him.

It was heartbreaking to learn that they
had both married other people. "What is the most
heartbreaking thing you can think of?"
he asked. Her list included the dawn,
Vassar graduation, and the city
of Paris, which she described in vivid prose
before she set foot in France. It was
the one infallible rule she used
to write her acclaimed series of travel guidebooks.

He realized why he married her—
so he wouldn't have to think about her,
or about sex, or about other women: the hours
they consumed like crossword puzzles
and chocolate-covered cherries.

She said the most obvious things
but she said them well.

She tried to impress people but kept blundering,
as when she attributed the phrase "Make it new"
to William Carlos Williams.

She had the soul of a stranger.

WANTING to see how things with Juan and his family and his friends would play out over time, I withdrew for a few months. I phoned Sunnyside every now and then, but essentially I was out of touch until the fall. Then I made my way back to the valley.

Rosa and Rafael, I found, had been giving *la compañía* hell. Rafael had gone to a UST Inc. shareholders' meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut, where, surrounded by hundreds of nonplussed men in suits, he had stood up, wearing his best cowboy hat, and, though shaking with nerves, had given a fiery speech about how one of their companies was exploiting farmworkers in Washington State. He spoke in Spanish, with a union official providing simultaneous translation. The speech was coolly received in Greenwich, but a big hit back in Sunnyside.

Rosa, meanwhile, had just returned from a demonstration near Seattle. It seemed that *la compañía*—a relatively modern, liberal employer, as agribusiness

There were things that she loved besides herself—
flowers, poems.

She was obsessed with the difficulty
of finding good nectarines in New York City.
They cost an arm and a leg and were mealy.

She said something critical
He flew off the handle
She asked, "Are you saying it's over?"
He said Fuck you
She said Fuck you and told him to leave
All right, he said, I'm leaving
if that's the way you want it
and if you want to know
where I am, I'm in Palm Springs
fucking Lana Turner
as Frank Sinatra put it to Ava Gardner
who was in her bathtub at the time
it was 1952

She got so depressed she stayed in her room
all day. At least that way she would stay
out of trouble. Her job kept her sedentary.
The only exercise she got was fixing a sandwich
and writing dialogue for a man and a woman
while one is packing a suitcase: "What are you
doing?" "What does it look like I'm doing?"

It rained all day, converting a September morning
into a November afternoon. The speed
of thinking was faster than the speed of light.
"How's your ex-wife?"
"She's divorced, too," he replied.
"That's what we have in common."

He had the odd habit of smiling when he was tense.
This made him a lousy poker player but won her sympathy.
She liked his bohemian life. Or didn't really
but said she did. The joy went out of his eyes
but the smile stayed on his face,
having nowhere else to go. God's image
was shaving in the mirror, feeling like hell,
missing her, wondering who she was.

—David Lehman

firms go, and very conscious of its public image—had sponsored a series of outdoor concerts, and that the union had succeeded in persuading some of the entertainers, such as Willie Nelson and Jackson Browne, to cancel their engagements. Other performers had refused to cancel, and the union had set up picket lines outside the shows. Traffic had been tied up, and press attention had been generous. Rosa showed me photographs of Ralph marching in the demonstration and of herself standing next to a huge cutout picture of Tony Bennett.

Juan, too, had finally got some politics. It seemed that the company had transferred him to another farm, some fifty miles from Sunnyside, where a group of anti-union workers from California was strong. The intrusive, pro-company diatribes of his new co-workers got on Juan's nerves. He took to wearing a U.F.W. button on the job, and to countering the anti-union speeches he heard each day on the bus from Sunnyside with a raised fist and a firm cry of "*La unión!*" Rafael and Rosa were, of course, delighted. But then Juan was laid off.

"They knew I would talk to the people," Juan said. "So I'm jobless."

His unexplained absences from work, which had apparently become frequent, might also have had something to do with it, I heard.

I asked about the Alaska expedition. Had they managed to make mass cash in a fish cannery? Juan looked uncomfortable and mumbled something. Apparently, no one had gone. Neither, I gathered, was the Yakima house-sharing idea coming together as planned. When I asked about Mary Ann, Juan looked extremely uncomfortable. It seemed they had broken up.

I asked Juan why.

"The guys decided," he said tightly. We were in his parents' living room. He kept his eyes on the TV.

I waited.

"It was just too weird," he finally said. "Having a chick hang out with us, getting drunk, doing everything."

Not sitting in the bitch seat, I thought.

"I kept saying, 'Hey, let's go pick up Mary Ann.' But we never did. It wasn't my car, so I couldn't really do anything about it. They just stopped picking her up."

I WENT to see Mary Ann. I found her at her mother's house, sorting through baby clothes. She looked tired. Her hair was different, though I couldn't say exactly how. She and Victoria were moving to Seattle, she said. They were going to live with her sister. She already had a job lined up. I asked what had happened with Juan.

She sighed. "He just didn't feel the same, I guess," she said.

She folded a whole stack of clothes before she went on. "His mother was really upset. She wanted us to get married."

Mary Ann's hair, I decided, was fuller, more teased than I remembered it.

"But, you know, Juan always had this other little girlfriend on the side," she said wearily. "Rachel. She's young. She's not his equal. She'll just see him when he wants to see her. His friends all have girls like her, beeping them all the time, waiting for them to call. I'm not like that. I guess I was too much for Juan. Too much like him.”

I asked if it had come down to a choice, for Juan, between her and his friends.

Mary Ann stared at me, long and hard, her eyes full. She nodded. After a while, she said, “So I wasn’t going to just hang around. I just got into something completely different.”

I reached out and took her left wrist and turned it over. On the inside of her forearm, stencilled into the pale flesh below the elbow, was a big, new-looking tattoo. “SUREÑA’S 3CE,” it said, in spidery black Gothic script.

“I told you,” Mary Ann said. “I got into something totally different.”

What Mary Ann had got into was the Little Valley Locos—Camel’s gang. (“3CE” stood for the number thirteen.) “People don’t understand about gangs,” she told me. “Gangs are like a family. My mom and I couldn’t get along, you know. She would always just push me out the door. So where could I go? I’ve always hung around guys. And I was, like, looking for myself. So Camel got me into the L.V. L.s. I got corded in by nine guys.”

Corded in?

“They corded me in,” she said impatiently. “They beat me up. I got a black eye, but I fought hard. I never cried. Some *guys* cry. I got mad because they ripped my T-shirt. It wasn’t the shirt—I got mad because my back was bare. But somebody gave me another shirt. And after that they knew I could handle mine.”

I asked if she had been romantically involved with Camel.

Mary Ann looked incredulous. “*No*,” she said. “You don’t understand. I was never disrespected in the L.V. L.s. They never touched me. They never tried to rape me. They might make a joke—‘You have a nice butt,’ or something—but they’d immediately get really embarrassed after they did it. Being the only girl, I got a lot of attention. A *lot*. And that made me want to stay. Some of those guys, they worshipped the ground I walked on. My tag name was La Genius. They called me that because they said I knew everything. It’s up on the wall in the alley behind the Flores house: La Genius.”

I WENT by the Flores house, and found Camel and his brother Lee hanging out in the basement with a scrawny, talkative L.V. L. named Frankie. I asked them about Mary Ann.

“Mary Ann used to be like high society,” Frankie said. “She lived over by the Hill”—an expensive part of town—“and she hung out with the preppies. That was till her dad got locked up. Then she fell. First, she hung out with Juan Guerrero and those guys. Then us.”

“She was crazy,” Camel said. He laughed lightly. “She used to act like a guy. Saying stuff to other guys, *fighting* with guys. Jumping in whenever we were fighting.”

“She was a freak,” Frankie said. “An addict. Weed, coke. Soon as she got her baby’s check, she’d like buy some Pampers, then we’d party out with the rest. Get a keg, some dope. We called her La Genius at first, but later we called her La Marijuana.”

“I did her tattoo,” Lee said. “You seen it?”

I said I had.

“Nice, eh? *Sureña por vida.*”

They all laughed.

I asked if they had seen Mary Ann lately.

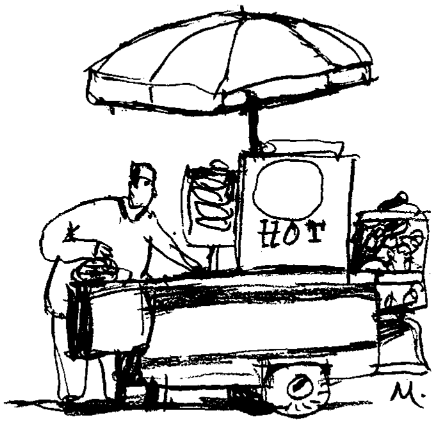
There was an awkward silence.

“Nah,” Camel said, finally. “She went to jail, and they scared her in there. So she ain’t really down right now.”

The L.V. L. basement crew suddenly felt like a backup band without their torch singer.

“You been talking to them B.G.L.s?” Camel demanded to know, changing the subject. “What are them punks saying about us?”

MARY ANN had in fact gone to jail, after getting into a fight in the Price Chopper parking lot. And the police had indeed scared her—by suggesting that the state might take Victoria away from her. She was held less than two weeks but came out determined to leave the L.V. L.s. Jail also reordered her personal life. “That was where I met Brandon,” she told me. “He’s twenty-one, he’s white. He was just in jail for a few days on some old M.I.P.s”—convictions for having been a minor in possession of alcohol. “We were like the only ones in the whole jail who liked 107.3, the alternative-rock station. So that was kind of how we got together. And since I’ve been out I’ve just been really careful. I’ve been like totally avoiding the gang life. Me and Brandon have a good relationship. He treats me like a woman, the way I want to be treated. We’re going to Seattle together.”



“YOU been talking to Mary Ann?” Juan was sprawled, as usual, on his parents’ couch. Outside, the street was hot and bright; inside, the room was dim and cool and loud with the music of Smashing Pumpkins.

“She tell you about her little gang?”

A bit, I said.

“You know, when she stopped hanging out with our crowd, she like suddenly disappeared,” Juan said. “And when she reappeared she was like a freak. She was all dressed down, with a tattoo on her arm. Getting in all kinds of trouble, fighting with other gang girls. I was like really depressed about it. She just took us all by storm.”

An operatic song came on, full of booming rock violin. “I used to be a little boy. . . . What’s a boy supposed to do? *The killer in me is the killer in you.*”

“She tell you about getting corded in?” Juan asked.

“She did. She said she got a black eye and a ripped shirt.” I waited a beat. “I don’t think there was any sex.”

Juan looked at me steadily. “Really?”

I said I would bet on it.

Juan turned away. “I heard she got fucked by a bunch of guys when she got corded in,” he said. His relief was audible. “That’s what freaked me out.” He sat up and peeked briefly through the curtains at the street outside. “But I would never ask her about something like that, you know. Not unless I was really drunk.”

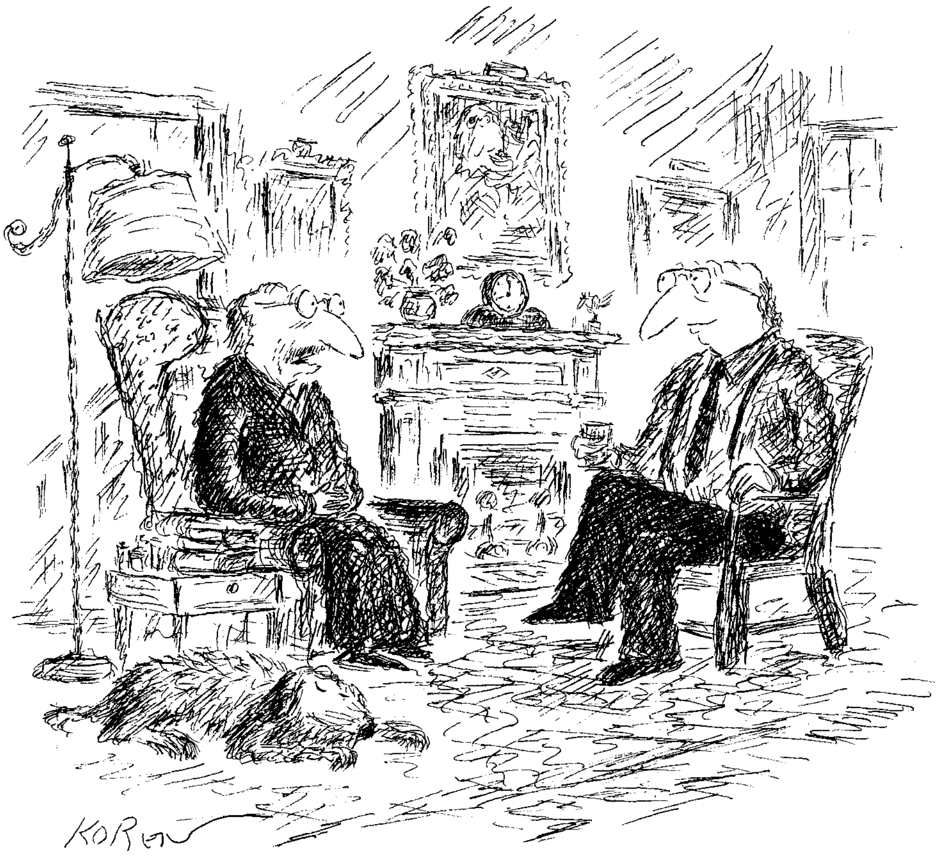
It was peculiar but distinct, this sense of delicacy that Juan and Mary Ann still seemed to have about each other. Drugs and alcohol were their truth serums, letting them discover if they really did think alike. They still struck me as a dream pair: two halves of a whole proposition.

And yet Juan had blown it. Conditions were never auspicious for love on an equal basis. And now Mary Ann was off to the Emerald City without him.

Juan peeked through the curtains again. He was keeping an eye on the street for a reason. He and Cuco Zesati had recently been in a fight with two brothers from a gang called the Ghetto Boys. During the fight, Juan had taken a baseball bat away from one of the brothers, David Muñoz, and broken his nose with it. Muñoz was now publicly vowing revenge. Although he was only sixteen, he had an outsized reputation around Sunnyside for violent ambush and mayhem. I had heard a local detective say that he expected David Muñoz to kill someone before the end of the year. (Don Vlieger, I learned, when I sought him out for comment, was no longer working in Sunnyside. His contract with the school district had expired.) Meanwhile, Cuco had got into another brawl, just around the corner from the Guerreros' house. That brawl had put three people in the hospital, including Cuco, who had been stabbed in the back with a *sword*.

"This town is getting so messed up," Juan said. "I'm not going out at all now."

I picked up the Smashing Pumpkins compact-disk box and read the song titles on it: "Disarm," "Spaceboy," "Silverfuck," "Mayonnaise." The liner notes on the box, written by the group's lead vocalist, Billy Corgan, thanked all those "without whose support I would never leave my bed."



"Son, now that you've turned sixty there are a few things you should know about the family."

• •

DURING the last weeks I spent in Sunnyside, Juan pretty much stayed hidden in his parents' house. He sometimes slipped out at night to go cruising with his friends, but his days were all passed in rock-opera hibernation.

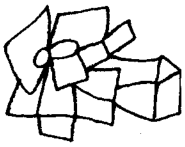
Juan was, as he put it, "on Pause." I began to think of him as Bartleby—perennially preferring not to. He seemed, that is, to balk at every road put in front of him: school, sports, gangs, the fields, the union (he lost interest as soon as he was fired), even the life road represented by Mary Ann. (I, like his mother, thought he was crazy to pass her up.) But the dangers Juan faced on the streets of Sunnyside were, I came to see, quite real. David Muñoz and the Ghetto Boys were certainly gunning for him—Muñoz mentioned, when I spoke to him, a plan to ambush Juan and Cuco with a twenty-gauge shotgun—and the attitude of the local police toward Juan became chillingly clear when I interviewed a young Latino officer. After I asked about Juan, he remarked, "A typical smart-ass. You know, that guy's probably not going to last very much longer. A lot of people I've talked to want to beat him up royally. He's also in danger of us taking him out for doing something stupid."

Rosa and Rafael were more worried than ever. Rosa said, "We could throw Juan out of the house, because he's eighteen and he's not contributing. Many families do that. But he would just do worse in the streets." She talked about sending him to stay with relatives in Mexico—an idea that plainly held zero appeal for Juan.

The conundrum that had first struck me about Juan—how he could possibly not share his parents' unionism—had come to seem less of a mystery. To me, Rosa and Rafael were exemplary immigrants. Lacking the capital to start a small business, they had thrown themselves into the labor struggle with heartbreaking dedication. Contrary to the school principal's view that they were the type "who scream discrimination," I saw them as the type who actually believe in the ideals of equality and opportunity. I sometimes wondered if Juan found his parents' decency and dedication oppressive, or if his indifference to their ideals was just part of a standard-issue adolescent rebellion. But Juan, from everything I could tell, actually admired his parents. The unhappy truth is that the rock-video culture that forms so much of his world view simply provides no referents for their kind of heroism. The dignity of labor is no longer even a minor value in the devouring consumerism of the America he has grown up in.

In fact, Juan has been reared with a dense admixture of values, Mexican and American. The ancient code of *machismo* clearly informs his fighting life, and his failure to thrive in school or at work might well be attributed to the sort of cultural liability that conservative poverty theorists, such as Lawrence Mead, believe many African-Americans and Latino immigrants suffer from. Juan's parents, however, can hardly be described as fatalistic, resigned to their low status, or unwilling to work hard—the standard cultural slurs laid on poor Latinos. No, Juan's anomie is not Third World but thoroughly American.

And the ironic attitudes he so often strikes probably have as much to do with the need to be always negotiating between Latino and Anglo cultures as they have to do with any postmodern sophistication.



In reality, his experience beyond the Yakima Valley is pathetically slight. And some of it—such as the racialized violence in juvenile detention, where the white kids are "K.K.K."—constitutes an introduction to an America almost too bleak and shameful to contemplate. In part, though, his isolation and inexperience are simply a function of poverty. He has, for instance, never been on an airplane. I once asked him if he had ever seen the ocean. He said he had seen the Atlantic a couple of times while he was at the youth camp in western Washington. I must have looked surprised. He blushed and quickly corrected himself. "I mean the Pacific. See? I'm already forgetting my oceans. I gotta get my G.E.D."

And yet Juan didn't really seem to be in any hurry to get his G.E.D., let alone start college. I once asked him if he knew anyone who had gone to the University of Washington. He thought about it. "Maybe some people a few years ago," he said. "Some really smart kids. Maybe some white kids more recently. But nobody I could call a close friend."

"College" was an idea ritually invoked, but I had come reluctantly to see that—as was true of vast numbers of his peers—some essential bonding had not taken place between Juan and the schools, which made the notion of higher education, as it were, academic.

My own understanding of gangs, meanwhile, had become strangely indulgent. Latino gangs had degenerated since their founding days, when they functioned as community self-defense units against the depredations of Anglo rednecks in Texas and California, but even in these self-lacerating times, I thought, if I were growing up as a Camel Flores or a David Muñoz I would definitely be in a gang. Their hunch that the future held little more for them than poverty and futility was irrefutable. So why *not* live as large as they could while they could—claim some space, some teenage glory?

Juan, admittedly, was a different matter. He, too, might suffer from what anthropologists call "multiple marginality" in America, but he still seemed hopeful that he might have other chances in life, a trajectory that might be all his own.

Brooding over these matters in my motel room, I had a curious flash of memory: I was once in a gang myself. I had completely forgotten about it. It was in junior high, in Honolulu. It was a racial gang—whites only—at a school where whites were a small minority. We called ourselves the In Crowd. Our ostensible raison d'être was self-defense: before I joined, I was regularly attacked simply for being white and because I had no gang to back me up. But the truth was that we were an offensive force, fighting constantly and joyfully. Some of the fights were fair, but many were not. I still cringe when I remember some of the attacks I took part in. More to the point, I can half recall what a life of adolescent fighting felt like: rich, dramatic, absolutely vital. For me, it all abruptly faded when my family moved back to a middle-class suburb of Los Angeles. I paid nothing for my thrill ride in the street-fighting world. And in high school, too, my friends and I paid little or nothing for our adventures on the far side of the law, our "experiments" with drugs and petty crime. We were white, we were college-bound, so they were juvenile high jinks. Does it even need saying that for Juan and his friends the rules are fundamentally different?

And then there were the consequences of sex. When I was in high school, I never knew a teen-age father. When girls got pregnant, they got abortions. It was grim and it was terrifying, but it was not—at least, not for the boys—life-changing. Among Juan's friends, meanwhile, boys and girls are constantly becoming parents. In Juan's own case, I learned, not only was there a Rachel, as Mary Ann had said, but Rachel, who was a sixteen-year-old high-school junior, was pregnant.

Juan's comment after he told me about Rachel's pregnancy: "Pretty weird, huh?"

On my last day in Sunnyside, I drove over to the Guerreros'. It was mid-afternoon, and Rafael and Rosa were still at work. Juan shuffled into the living room, wearing only a pair of sweatpants. There were two fresh scars on his right arm.

I asked Juan about the scars. He stared at them for a minute, as if he hadn't seen them before. "This one's from that fight with the Muñozes," he said finally, indicating a long, healing slice above his elbow. "And this other one was just stupid." He fingered what looked like a big, nasty burn on his biceps. "A bunch of us were drunk, and decided to burn ourselves with cigarettes. Some of them came out better than this. This was supposed to be a face, but you can't really see it now."

I was leaving for Seattle the next day, and I thought I would try to see Mary Ann. I asked Juan if he had any message for her.

"Just stay in touch," he said softly.

I asked if his parents knew yet about Rachel's pregnancy.

"I told 'em. They were pretty upset at first. But now my mom's starting to get into it. She's looking forward to having a baby around. She wants us to get married."

And?

"I seem not to really want to right now."

"You should be a diplomat," I said.

Juan laughed. He turned on the TV and went to the kitchen in search of food. Finding myself unable to watch another minute of Snoop Doggy Dogg, I wandered around the living room, noting a small plaster shrine on the wall. The shrine held a figure of a young boy and, except for a small crucifix, was the only religious touch in a room full of family photographs, china geese, and martial-arts trophies.

"That's Santo Niño de Atocha," Juan said, wolfing down a slice of cold pizza. "He's from Mexico, from Zacatecas. He's like my mom's favorite saint. He's bad. He helps you. I want to go see him."

"Really? To Mexico? You?"

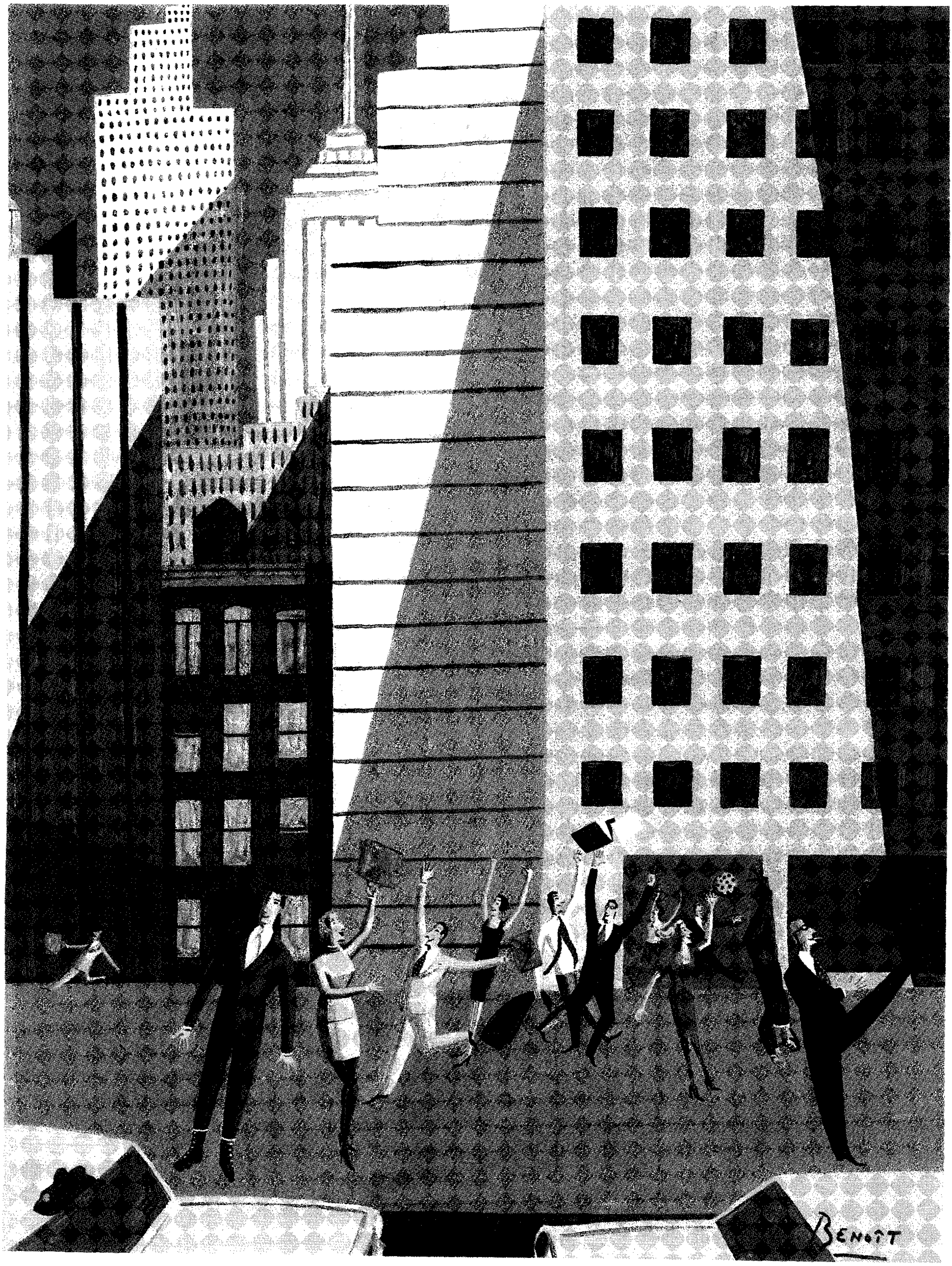
Juan had not lost his ability to startle me.

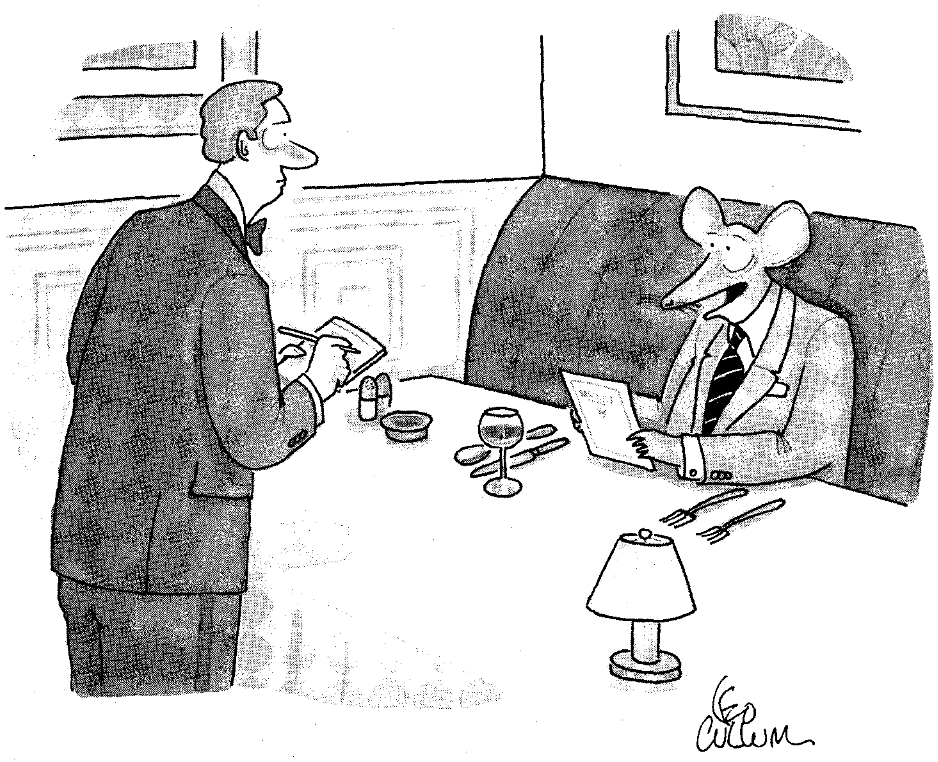
"Yeah," Juan said. "I think he's cool. In a way."

I was starting to feel a bit undone. Juan

SKETCHBOOK · BY BENOÎT VAN INNIS

FIVE O'CLOCK





"The cheese balls—can I get that as an entrée?"

looked at me sympathetically, as if I were the one trapped in a nightmare. He shrugged. "It's all cool, in a way, I would say," he said.

IN Seattle, Mary Ann and I went to a plush waterfront restaurant for dinner. She seemed different—as if her native enthusiasm were now under firmer control. She also looked different. She wore pearls, heels, light makeup, an expensive-looking dress. She looked, I thought, like a prosperous college student, and she seemed delighted when I said so. She was actually thinking, she said, about moving to the university district, on the north side of the city.

In the meantime, she and Victoria were living on the south side with her sister. "It's still the ghetto," Mary Ann said, sighing. "Mainly Hispanics. It's even got gangs." Her place of work, the Sky View Casino, which I had asked to see, was also less glamorous than I had imagined. I had pictured a revolving baccarat club on the roof of a skyscraper overlooking Puget Sound, but the Sky View Casino had turned out to be a bingo parlor in a run-down shopping center in the woods on the edge of the city. Mary Ann said she liked working there, and had just received a raise, and would soon have enough money saved to get her own apartment and a car. "Brandon and I really want our own place," she said. "He's in Grandview right now helping his dad, but he's got a job lined up over here."

Mary Ann was still keen on Brandon, obviously, but when the conversation turned to Juan she surprised me. She asked me what I thought would become of him. I told her that I had recently asked him where he hoped to be in ten years' time, and that he had replied "Seattle."

Her eyes burned into mine. "If it was up to me, he'd come up here right now," she said. "Things could still work out. We could both get jobs . . ."

A vein of self-contradiction ran through much of our conversation. On the one hand, Mary Ann was still passionate about the L.V. L.s. "I still won't talk to *Norteños*," she said vehemently. "They got 'em here, too. I may not be kicking it with my homeys, but I'm still *Sur*." She went on to denounce various enemies in Sunnyside, including David Muñoz.

But Muñoz was also a *Sureño*, I said. In fact, there seemed to be few *Norteños* in Sunnyside. All the feuding was among *Sureños*. I said something facetious about the narcissism of small differences.

"I don't know about that," she said. "But I know where I'm from. I know what I claim. It's the people I've known the longest. If I had grown up around different people, I might have gone *Norte*. I admit that."

It was a strange, sideways argument we were having, over our salmon and chocolate mousse—about identity and fate and free will, at least in my mind.

At the same time, Mary Ann kept returning to her fantasy of a future for herself in Seattle that would have nothing to do with her gang-girl past. "I want to drive a Lexus," she said. "I want to wear a nice suit, and come in to work on one of these ferries, like from Bainbridge Island. I want to carry a briefcase, a really nice leather one, and have a big office, and a big desk. And I want to have my daughter in a private school. That's all."

I said I thought these things might be within her reach if she finished college. I was uneasy, though, with the shallowness of these set-designed ambitions. I wondered if Mary Ann felt it as well. What had become of her dream of being a psychotherapist? Was the city to her really just a place where one got to carry an expensive briefcase? When she talked about gangs or about Juan, vexed though the subjects might be, there was a wholeness to her—a force and solidity that was missing when she stargazed about Bainbridge Island.

After dinner, we went for a drive around Seattle. Mary Ann navigated. As we passed through a posh shoreline district, she exclaimed, "This neighborhood is perfect! It's all white people. A lot of Jewish people. Have you ever seen the way Jewish people dress? The women? It's like unbelievably nice! They have *no* problems in this neighborhood."

"Do you mean they have no *Sureños*?" I asked.

"I mean they have no *Norteños*," she said.

THINGS did not get easier for Juan in Sunnyside. A few weeks after I left, a sixteen-year-old named Pedro Cardenas, a member of the Ghetto Boys, was stabbed to death in the Park-N-Pak parking lot. The police rounded up the usual suspects, including Juan and Cuco. They gave Cuco a polygraph test, and he passed it. They had no evidence against Juan, and released him. Two members of the L.V.L.s were charged with second-degree murder; one pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter, the other to second-degree assault with a deadly weapon.

Juan continued to lie low. "It wouldn't be smart to go out," he told me over the phone, a few days after the Cardenas killing. "I don't want to be the next guy in the paper that died. I'd rather just read about it."

A few weeks later, there was another ominous development. "Ralph got harassed by some B.G.L.s yesterday," Juan said when I phoned. His voice was tight. "He was in a store, wearing a maroon sweater he made in school, so these guys said he was a Blood, a *Norteño*. They called him a faggot and a punk, and stuff, and the store owner called the cops."

I asked Juan if he felt responsible.

"Yeah," he said. "I might have to get involved. Pound a few heads, just to show them to kick back and leave him alone."

Were Rosa and Rafael aware of the threats their sons were facing? When I spoke to Rosa on the phone, she seemed preoccupied with Juan and Rachel's baby. She was still lobbying for a wedding. "It is my tradition that they should get married," she told me.

"That's right," Juan said after she gave him the phone. "It's her tradition, not mine." His mother, he said, was actually thrilled about the approaching birth. She was already negotiating with Rachel's mother over child care—hoping to maximize her own time with the baby. Rachel did not plan to take time off from school.

JUAN and Rachel became unwed parents at the end of March. They named their daughter Jasmine Jay Tasha Guerrero. I asked Juan how they had come up with Tasha. He said, "I heard it off a rap group. It's some chick who raps, and it just stuck in my head as a bad name."

Within a few weeks, Rosa and Rafael had another reason to celebrate: *La compañía* and *la unión* had come to a historic agreement. After eight years of ferocious struggle, management had caved in. Chateau Ste. Michelle's farmworkers would be allowed to decide, by secret ballot, whether they wanted the U.F.W. to represent them. The election was held in June, and the union won easily. Collective bargaining began and a contract was signed in November.

Juan, however, missed all the fiestas held in honor of the union's victory. He was in jail. Nothing particularly dramatic had occurred. He had had some outstanding charges from 1994, for being a minor in possession of alcohol. Then the police had given him a ticket outside Taco Bell after they found a joint in the ashtray of a car he was driving. Then, a week later, there was a fight at the AM/PM Mini-Market. The police picked up Juan in connection with the fight. When he appeared before the municipal judge, charged with fourth-degree assault, he took the opportunity to plead guilty to the earlier ticket for marijuana possession. This was a major mistake. He had no lawyer. He didn't think he needed one. All the charges he faced were misdemeanors. But the judge, knowing his juvenile record, immediately handed Juan the maximum sentence for misdemeanor pot possession: one year in county jail.

Rosa and Rafael did what they could, frantically filing papers, finding a lawyer. But it is difficult to appeal a guilty plea successfully, and they made no headway. Rosa, according to Ralph, could not stop crying.

Juan phoned me from jail. "I tell her it's cool," he said. "It's not like I'm hurt." He sounded as plaintive as I had ever heard him. But when I asked him how he was holding up, his voice steadied. "They think it's going to crush me," he said. "But it's not going to crush me. I'm just going to kick back and do my time. I'll take it from here. You know what I mean?"

When we said goodbye, Juan gave me the street farewell: "Laters."

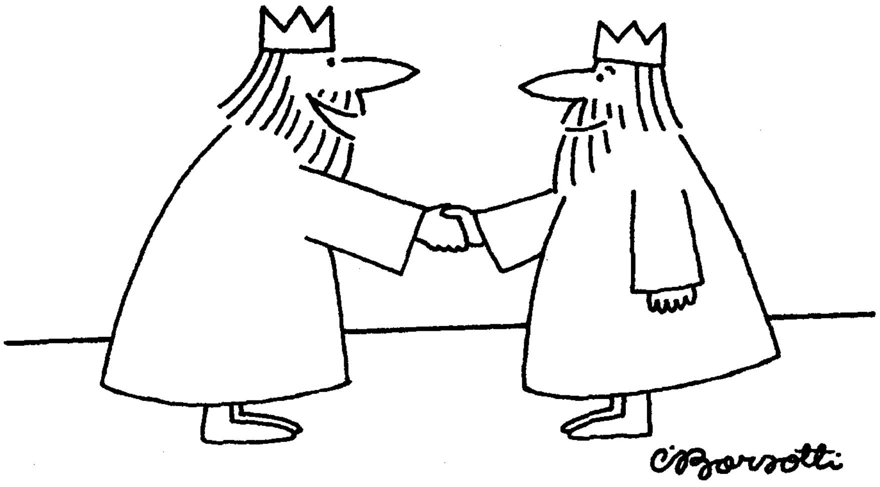
The next time he called, a week or two afterward, Cuco was with him. It seemed that the police had ultimately charged Cuco with assault for the melee that had gained him his sword wound. Cuco sounded stunned. He kept saying, "It's not fair. It's not fair. I ain't been in no trouble for nine months."

I spoke to Juan separately, and he explained, "Cuco's supposed to graduate next week. He already rented his cap and gown, and everything. He was gonna be the first one in his family to graduate. Everybody thinks the cops did this to him on purpose, because they hate him. He's calling anybody he thinks might be able to help him."

But nobody could help Cuco. In the end, he missed his graduation and, like Juan, was sentenced to one year in county jail.

And that is where Juan is now. (Cuco got out on appeal, in November.)

Mary Ann, to my disappointment, moved back to Sunnyside and, the last time we spoke, was once again staying with her mother. Things in Seattle had not worked out. She would not elaborate. She and Brandon were thinking about moving to Oregon, where she planned to study nursing. She had also been thinking, she told me, with a naughty little laugh, about surprising Juan with an unannounced appearance at the jail. It seemed that she had taken to visiting Jasmine, Juan's daughter. "Rachel doesn't like it," Mary Ann said. "But I took her a little baby outfit and a little bear, wrapped up like a present, with a card from Victoria, so that was O.K. Mainly, I just visit the baby when she's with Juan's mom. I saw her yesterday. She's *so beautiful!*" ♦



"Wow! I can feel the synergy already."

PROFILE

THE BIG PICTURE

Whether Sharon Stone wins an Oscar for "Casino" or not, she should win one for the best role she has created so far—that of Sharon Stone.

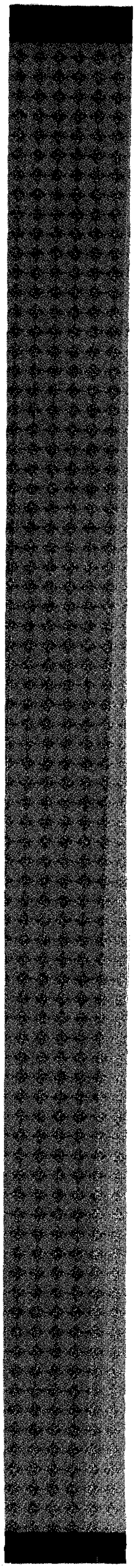
BY JOHN LAHR

On any day, at any hour, anywhere in the world, Sharon Stone and her private parts can be called up on the World Wide Web with the click of a mouse. One week in January, I was the twenty-five-thousand-one-hundred-and-seventeenth visitor to the Sharon Stone Complete Index on the Internet. A hundred and eighty-three images of Stone, from high-school yearbook to "Casino," in all her styles, moods, and degrees of undress, appeared on the menu for me to choose from. Another Web site on Stone advertised "Nude Pictures!," but the computer informed me, "New Stone page went down due to traffic." In fact, I tried to access a handful of "babelicious" images of Stone, but with no luck. Stone, who stopped the trading on the New York Stock Exchange when she ventured onto the floor, in 1993, was causing congestion even on the Internet. "Fame" has its root in the Latin word for "rumor"; and to increase product demand a star must constantly feed new imagery to the whispering gallery. Stone learned to play this publicity game early and well. A few years ago, she said in an interview, "I started to realize that in order to be a great actress and have access to great material, I needed to be a movie star."

Yet for more than a decade Stone was known as Queen of the B's. Her wager finally paid off in January of this year, when her name was read out as Best Actress, Drama, at the Fifty-third Annual Golden Globe Awards. Stone, who only the day before had complained to a friend, "I never get anything I want," was a long shot to win, and she was uncharacteristically at a loss for words as she approached Tom Hanks, who held out the bulbous statuette. "Well, uh . . ." she began. Then the light seemed to come on in her big personality. She put her left hand on her hip, took a breath, and beamed her sardonic smile at the audience. "O.K.," she said. "It's a miracle."

The audience laughed, and so did Stone, because, in a way, it was. "Actress years are like dog years, and that makes me about two hundred and sixty-six," Stone has said. She had reached the point in the upward trajectory of a star's career when the star and the public renegotiate their contract, trading work for worship. As early as September, 1994, when "Casino" went before the cameras, Stone sensed a sea change. "I've just completed my first day of shooting," she wrote to her best friend of fifteen years, the actress Mimi Craven, "and feel like I've done the best work of my life. . . . Must be the desert air." Now she'd been proved right. Stone went into the ceremony a goddess; she came out an actress—and, incidentally, raised her asking price from twelve million dollars a picture to fifteen million.

Stone is a star of the old school, who believes that "the public is my employer." She is, as they say, "focussed." "I'm of peasant stock," she says. "I put my head down and work. Push. Push. Push. Push. There's nothing delicate or dainty about it." Her proletarian grit is part of her humor. "If I have to sleep upside down like a bat so I don't look like a basset hound, that's what I'm gonna do," she said to *GQ* last year, about turning thirty-seven. When Stone made her name, in 1992, with "Basic Instinct"—her first star billing in twenty-one movies—she embraced the glamour that eighties stars like Michelle Pfeiffer, Jessica Lange, and Demi Moore had abdicated, leaving the de-luxe public show of perfection usually associated with Hollywood to the supermodels. Stone



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AVEDON

Sharon Stone, New York City, February 1, 1996.

shrewdly filled the vacuum. "Carole Lombard, Clark Gable, Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire—that was my idea of what it was supposed to be like," she says. "I thought, Well, I can do that even if no one else does. Who cares?" Her change of direction sent a message to the audience. "I dress up to show that I am happy and grateful to be there," she once explained to *Vogue*. "That's what you do where I come from. I don't feel like saying 'Fuck you.' I feel like saying 'Thank you.' "

STARDOM is a reciprocal act of faith, in which the star's duty is to make abundance incarnate and the audience's duty is to keep believing in the star's image. The aura that Stone personifies is the virtual reality of capitalism: it sustains the illusion of both perfect individuality and perfect consumption. "She really is a genuine movie star," Martin Scorsese, who directed "Casino," says. "It's as if I'd met Joan Crawford. Movie stars know that they have an extraordinary power on the screen, and they create a world around them that's equal to that power or to how that power should be perceived." In Stone's case, the impact is as much verbal as visual. Joan Crawford once said of herself that she was made to be filmed, not met; Stone is definitely meant to be met. For her, the interview is another sound stage, on which—in a controlled environment and with no real life intervening—she can perform a version of her seductive, streamlined self. Stone is a master of manipulation, and she knows that there is no glamour without distance. Her detachment and her wit keep the public both engaged and at arm's length. Recently, when she was auctioning off Naomi Campbell's navel ring to movie panjandrums at a benefit in Cannes, a brash mogul offered Stone twelve thousand dollars if she tossed in her underwear. Stone didn't miss a beat. "Anyone with seven-fifty knows I don't wear underwear," she said.

WHEN Stone walked off the stage at the Golden Globes, she said to herself, "Roy would be proud." She was invoking the name of her acting coach and friend Roy London, who died of AIDS-related complications, at the age of fifty, in 1993. London acted with the Open Theatre in the late sixties and drifted into coaching in the early eighties. He never advertised for students but nonetheless amassed a distinguished list of clients, including Michelle Pfeiffer, Geena Davis, Faye Dunaway, Brad Pitt, and Elisabeth Shue. London's toughness and his insistence that an actor show his or her essence—however unlovely—are very much at the center of Stone's re-creation of herself as a star, and at our second meeting she took me to the offices of Chaos Productions, which she formed in 1993, to show me a tape of London talking about actors and acting. At first, this seemed to me a wary star's way of boxing clever with an inquiring reporter. (She had already surprised me by turning up at lunch with London's longtime partner, the producer Tim Healey, which made a regular interview impossible.) But I soon realized that she was making a canny choice about how to present herself. "No one as smart as Sharon Stone," David Thomson writes, in the third edition of his Biographical Dictionary of Film, "could survey her and Frances Farmer's career and do anything other than marry well and form a business." The world knows that Stone has not married well, but what the tabloid hoopla obscures is that Stone *is* a business. Over the years, her brand name has been packaged, Thomson points out, as romantic, sexpot, and destroyer of feeble men. Now, with a Golden Globe and an Academy Award nomination, Stone was understandably upgrading her product line to artist—and how better to show off the new, improved version than by showing me the coach who had helped design the original?

In the elegant beige calm of her office, Stone took a seat on the sofa between Healey and me and put her feet on a table where a duck decoy and Mexican crucifixes were set around a plate of SnackWells. Soon London materialized on the screen, with a salt-and-pepper beard and a partly bald pate. He was talking about Gary Cooper: "It's not that he knew he was going to win, but he knew he wasn't going to give up until he did. Which is very different. That's what's so exciting. You look at his career, and this guy really didn't have any roles of any substance till he was forty. That's how he lived his life. He hung in there."

London could have been talking about Stone. From London she had learned how to win and—something difficult for a working-class kid who grew up with no sense of entitlement—to allow herself to be a winner. "I'm addicted to winning," Stone says now. But the illusion of victory had been part of her image from the moment the camera spotted her, in the opening forty-five seconds of Woody Allen's "Stardust Memories" (1980). Stone, only a year out of Meadville, Pennsylvania (pop. 14,318), and trying to make it as a model in New York, remembers roller-skating to an extras' audition and being asked to meet Allen, who hired her as an extra. ("A nine-foot-tall blond teen-ager certainly got his attention," Stone says.) Then, during the shooting, she got a nonspeaking role as his fantasy woman. Onscreen, Allen, who plays a filmmaker, sits in a train compartment surrounded by affectless, ugly faces. While the train is stopped at a station, he stares out the window across the track and spots Stone on another train. Like all celluloid goddesses, she's a picture of radiance: she's draped in a white feather boa, her blond hair is piled high and decorated with gardenias, and she holds a trophy on her lap. Stone catches Allen's forlorn eye, reads his longing, and presses her full lips against the glass. In that instant, Allen captures what would become Stone's iconic star power. Her kiss is audacious but generous: she is the promise not so much of passion as of felt life. Her train pulls out, and, in his vain struggle to clamber out of his compartment to get to her, Allen dramatizes himself as the embodiment of negativity, a comic loser. Stone, however, is the personification of the positive, and the trophy she holds gives it away. She's winning at life.

I stopped the tape of London and asked Healey about London's view of Stone. "I hate to use the word 'voracious,' " he said.

"You can be honest," Stone said, smiling.

"We had this discussion where he said, 'She lives! She eats! She goes! She does! These other beauties will sit there and have a little of this, a little of that. Sharon's like, "Put it on the table, we're gonna eat it. We'll worry about it later." ' "

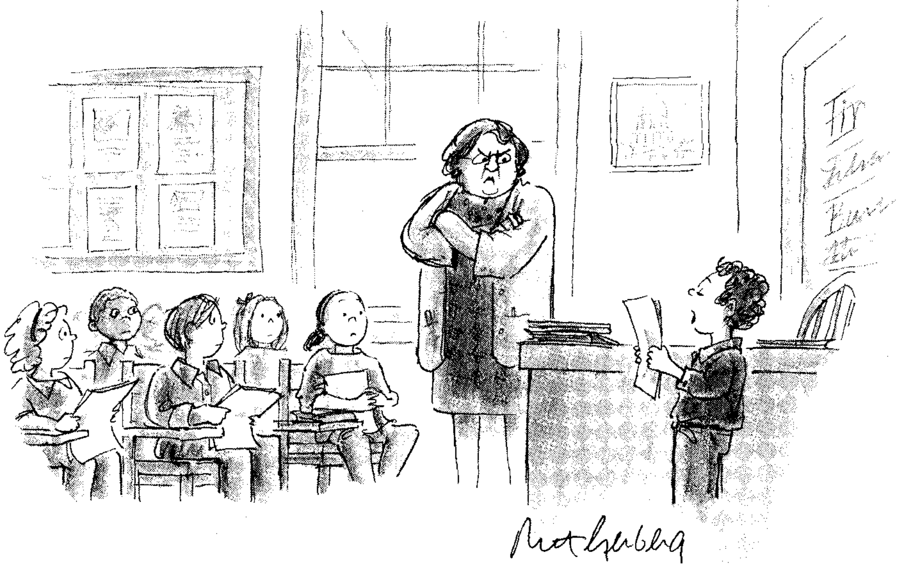
"Somebody once said to me, 'You're a consummate personality. You consume everything in sight,' " Stone said.

Even Stone's doppelgänger, the leggy, blond Mimi Craven, agrees. "Ravenous" is how she describes Stone: "She's doing her own filling. It's a fear of starvation of sorts." The director Mark Rydell, for whom Stone played an architect's frigid wife in "Intersection" (1994), recalls that "she pursued the part like a schnauzer attached to my pants leg." He adds, "I'd never thought of her. She was shooting a picture at the time. She came in on a Saturday and spent the whole day reading with Richard Gere. She was spectacular. She wanted that part. . . . She took me out to dinner. She would call me every third day when I wasn't even considering her for the part."

Stone's spirit of No Surrender comes through in the sense of danger that she brings to her best acting. She stole "Basic Instinct" from Michael Douglas, facing down five investigators by flashing her pootie-tootie at them, and when Ginger, in "Casino," knocks a tray of gambling chips sky high rather than be given chump change by the big winner she's been hustling, it's a gesture that defines her heartbreaking avarice throughout the film. In "Last Dance," directed by Bruce Beresford, forthcoming in May, Stone plays a convicted murderer on death row who initially refuses legal interference to save her life. As a star, Stone may have arrived late, but her aggressive show of sexuality was on schedule, in terms of the culture's shifting sexual politics. "In feminism, there was a certain giving up of one's female self," she says. "The choice was to be feminine or equal." Onscreen and off, Stone understands that her power resides in her unwillingness to relinquish her femaleness. Of course, she has been through everything a beautiful woman in the film business goes through. "The thing I like about her," says the director John Frankenheimer, for whom Stone played a photojournalist in "Year of the Gun" (1991), "is that everything she's gotten, she's gotten on her feet."

"Well," Stone said, on hearing the compliment, "you can only fuck your way to the middle."

Stone was called out of the room on business by her office manager, and Healey continued to talk about London's "unrelenting" relationship with her. "He was unwilling to rest with her until she got there," he said. "She didn't mean anything to anyone in Hollywood. She'd worked in these movies, and they had kind of written her off. You could get her in a certain kind of part in a certain kind of film. But that was it. She was in a niche. They were done with her." In fact, there is an entire chapter dedicated to Stone's early work in "Bad Movies We Love," to which she has written a cheeky foreword. The films include "Deadly Blessing" (1981), "The Vegas Strip Wars" (1984), "King Solomon's Mines" (1985), "Police Academy 4" (1987), "Action Jackson" (1988), "Tears in the Rain" (1988), and "Beyond the Stars" (1989).



"My composition is called 'Mrs. Torrence Is a Big Fat Idiot.' "

• •

Mainly, Stone remembers that period as the "tough, hard, pushing, trying" years. "I was angry most of the time," she says of her twenties. "I would find myself getting coffee in a restaurant, and if it wasn't hot or the way I liked it, it was just so intensely disappointing. The coffee was wrong!" She goes on, "I would find myself pointlessly rearing up against someone's will. I was just driving myself." Stone compares herself then to a trick seal with a ball on its nose, turning herself into whatever was necessary to please. "I was working. I was an actress. I was making my rent. I wanted to be nice," she says. "I wanted to write those thank-you notes. Get myself together. Get a manicure before I went to my audition. Be respectful. Do the right thing."

Back then, Stone didn't really have a vision—only a small-town girl's good manners, which weren't much of a substitute for one. "She used to sleep a lot," Mimi Craven remembers. Stone got "very, very depressed," even to the point of calling her agent to ask if she should quit the profession. " 'Is it really worth it? Should I keep on? I just don't know if I can take it anymore,' " Stone recalls asking. "And my agent said, 'No, it's not worth it. You should quit.' I said, 'You're such a fucking baby,' and put down the phone."

MEADVILLE, where Stone was born, in 1958, is a sleepy, rumpled town in the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania. This is dairy country, and it rains so much here that even the locals call it Mudville. A strange calm hangs over the place, a kind of entropy of ordinariness. David Letterman recently asked Stone where she was from, and she said, "A small town in Pennsylvania that I'd rather forget." The locals were not pleased. Stone, who was voted Miss Crawford County of 1975, declined an invitation to return last August to the county fair to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. At the time, she was ninety miles away, in Pittsburgh, filming a remake of "Diabolique" (which opens this week); she sent an autographed photo of herself to the pageant organizers. "Gee, thanks," the Meadville *Tribune* wrote in a sour editorial, recalling its early support of Stone when "her mother ran to the *Tribune* with a news release every time Sharon burped." The editorial went on, "Someday, when her claim to fame is reduced to a few dusty video cassettes, maybe she'll remember her local ties."

Stone's family home is a small, two-story pea-green box house that sits on a rolling acre of land. Her parents, Joe and Dorothy Stone, met at fourteen and had started a family by the time they were eighteen. Throughout Sharon's childhood, Joe was a tool-and-die maker, working the evening shift. He was earning ten dollars an hour in the seventies, when he quit and started his own business. He had left school in sixth grade; Dorothy had dropped out in eleventh grade, and she finally earned her high-school diploma in 1975, the same year as Sharon. Sherry, as she was called then, was the second of four children. Her older brother, Michael, had Bright's disease and in the eighties served two years in

Attica for cocaine possession; her sister, Kelly, had eye problems; and Patrick was dyslexic. "I was assigned to be the perfect child," she says. "The one who was good in school and well behaved and took care of everyone and didn't need much attention."

Even now, Stone says that her father's phrase "You done good, kid" is "the thing I want to hear most"; it can reduce her to tears. ("That hurts me," Craven says. "The fact that it *does* make her cry when her parents praise her, that she strives so much for their approval.") Joe Stone was a stern disciplinarian, who would haul his kids out of bed to rake the lawn by car light. "I used to smack their ass pretty often," he says. "That's kinda frowned on these days." Sharon learned to stand her gound by negotiating with her father. "He's a tough, tough motherfucker," she says. "I've never seen anyone back him down." She goes on, "If I wanted to go to a movie, I had to tell him why I wanted to go, what movie it was, why I should be allowed to go, and what I was gonna do to have permission, like mow the lawn. It was good for me, because nothing was cheap. Everything had value."

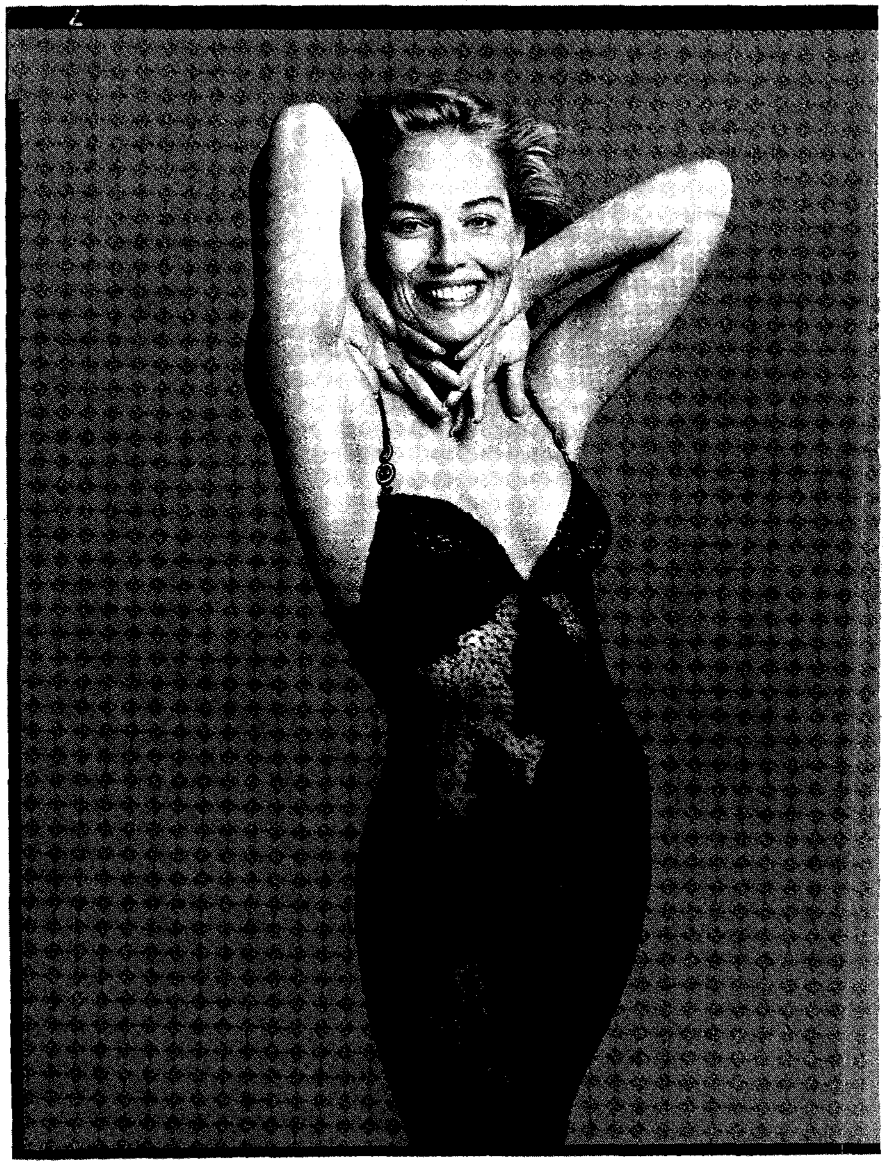
To the press, Stone often characterizes her teen-age self as a shy, nerdy young thing. "She's never been shy—never, in any way, shape, or form," Kathy Cotterman Dudas, a childhood friend of Stone's, says. She also told me that Stone wasn't particularly popular. "She didn't do that much dating in high school," Joe Stone says. "Seems like men have always been intimidated by her." Dudas says, "The mouth put people off. She was good at calling a spade a spade. A lot of people stayed away from her."

In 1975, Stone told her high-school art teacher, "I'm going to be the next Marilyn Monroe." At the time, she had appeared in only one play, a community production in which she giggled her way through her lines, but within a few years she had moved to New York and had signed with the Ford modelling agency. At first, she did well, getting commercials for Burger King, Clairol, Pert, and Avon. It didn't take long for her to lose the small-town fear of the big city; she soon found herself at a wingding hosted by Andy Warhol and Truman Capote. "I had that quick flush of success," Stone says. "Then all the photos came back. The scar I got from a riding accident was casting a shadow, so every photo had to be retouched. People didn't want to pay me. It was sort of over as quickly as it began. I eventually had an O.K. modelling career, but I lost the rush."

STONE was amused to discover recently that for a long time the people who work for her had referred to her as "the diva." When she moved into her new house last year—a three-bedroom, thirteen-thousand-square-foot ersatz château, where works by Degas, Léger, Ernst, de Kooning, Botero, Nevelson, and Basquiat keep her company—they called it Divadom. Stone has a personal manager, a housekeeper, a cook, an office manager, a business partner, a bodyguard, a publicist, and a series of hip ladies-in-waiting. She signs every company check herself, and admits to having a diva's temper, which she characterizes as "bad Irish berzerko." Legend has it that on location in Africa she so enraged the crew of "Allan Quartermain and the Lost City of Gold" that they urinated in the cistern to her bath. Stone calls that a terrific story, and she categorically denies that she once drew a gun on the cameraman for "Basic Instinct." She explains, "I did say, 'Look, I don't care how I look, but if I see cellulite you're a dead man.' "

A crucial part of Stone's job is the production of her image, so her arrival at Richard Avedon's photography studio in New York last month was both an event and a challenge. "I can feel the adrenaline," Avedon said as we waited for her. Stone was late, and Avedon was pacing the long, whitewashed studio corridor, decorated with huge prints of some of his most famous portraits, including the ten-picture tableau of Marilyn Monroe and the shot of Nastassja Kinski entwined with a boa constrictor.

At last, Stone, relaxed and eager, strode into the studio, wearing a mink coat. She put down her bag and looked around. "This is it," she said. "This is the big time." Almost immediately, the glamour ma-



chine went into full gear. The hair stylist, the makeup man, the dresser, even the day's lunch began to materialize. Stone's publicist and friend Cindi Berger arrived, dressed in a mink coat and sunglasses. "Look, we're both politically incorrect," Stone said, putting her arm around Berger so they were mink to mink. "Is this like the ultimate publicist? You have to take a picture of this."

Stone was in a buoyant mood, partly because she'd recently seen a cut of "Last Dance." She said, "I think maybe it's better than 'Casino.' " The talk came around by turns to Frank Zappa. "I have to show you the pictures I did," Avedon said. Stone asked, "Do you have one of the pictures you did of John Ford? The one where you can almost see under that eye patch. I've always wanted to see a real photo of it. That's such an amazing photograph."

Avedon told Stone that he wanted to photograph her as Eve, and showed her three sheer, fawn-colored dresses that he had chosen as possibilities for the shoot.

"This dress is a bit see-through," Stone said, examining one of them.

"Yeah," Avedon said.

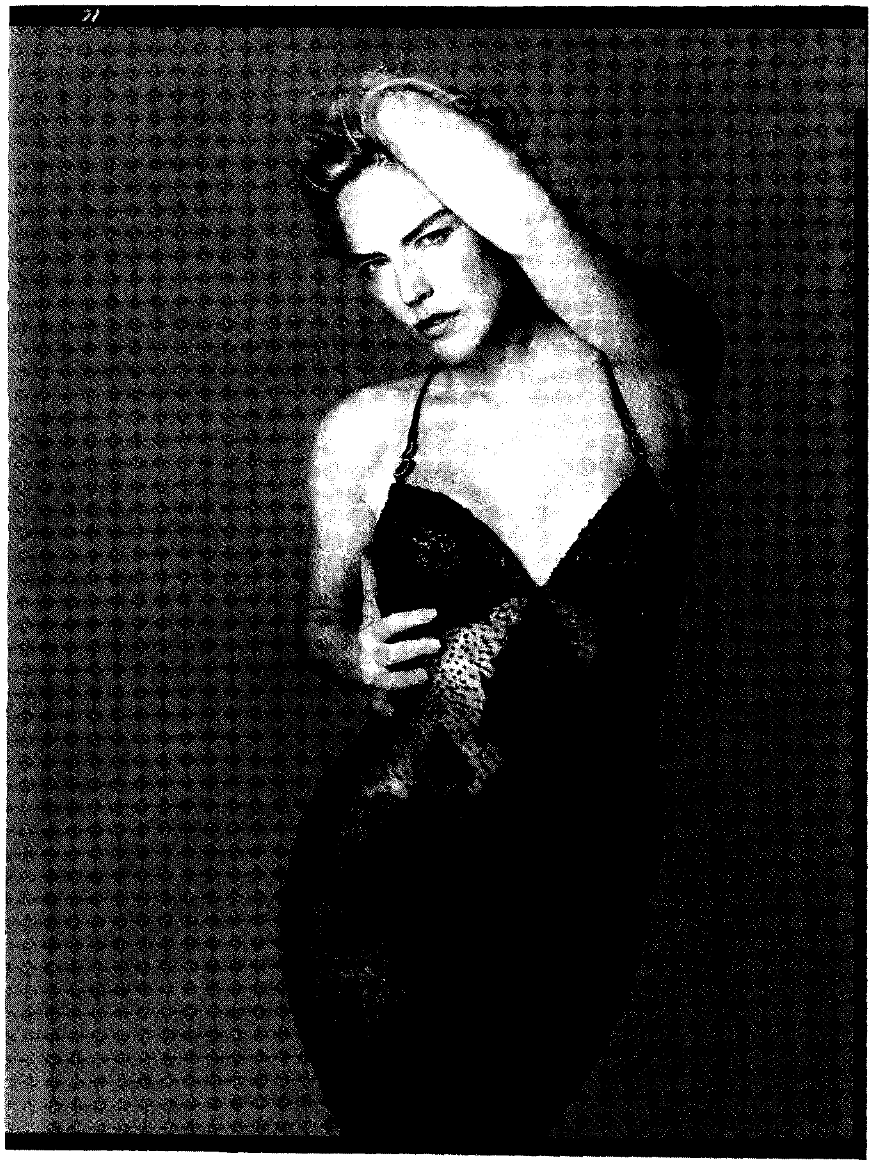
"I'm in good shape, but I broke my foot about three months ago and I haven't been able to do aerobics. I've added about four or five pounds. So we just have to be kind about that."

Avedon talked to Stone about his three ideas: Eve biting the apple; crowning herself with a diamond tiara; posing in nothing but a copy of the *Wall Street Journal.*

"We should get one with Art Buchwald's column on the back page," she said. "I love him. I met him this summer. I thought I was such a snazzy chess player until I played him. He crushed me."

After a little more flimflammery, Avedon said, "All right, to work. What do you want, Sharon? Ask for anything."

"Well, I usually just shoot heroin and drink champagne," Stone said, and she headed off to the dressing room to figure out her hair.



I asked Avedon to decode Stone's performance. "Everything she said was in the hope of being quoted," he said. "The name-dropping was very smart. My portrait of John Ford. Chess with Art Buchwald. They're professional charm workers. They're working. And this is work. You're not a friend. I'm not a friend." Avedon did a quick reconnoitre of Stone's dressing room and returned to continue his assessment. "That body will remain that body until she's an old lady. She's going to do everything. She's of now. She's a completely new version. There are business guys like that—who know who you have to charm and who you have to kill, and when and how. She said to the hairdresser, 'If you put the rollers in, put them in from the skull out and don't blow-dry my hair.' So right away she saved herself an hour and a half of mussing around by saying exactly what to do if it's gonna be right. She has it all down. That sounds pejorative, but it shouldn't. It's a triumph."

Later, just before lunch, the stakes of play between Avedon and Stone were quietly raised. "She picked the classiest of the three dresses. The one with the tendrils," he reported. "I have to see her in all three. She may be right. I have a hotter one there." He added, "We'll see who'll win."

Then Stone asked him when would be the best time to fit in an interview she'd scheduled, and Avedon became edgy. "This is no way. First, she addressed you, and now the next interviewer, on my time," he said. "That's not smart. In some way, it takes a little bit of the heart out of the artist who is supposed to be photographing her."

Forty minutes later, Avedon scuttled into the dressing room to check on the evolution of Stone's public face. "She has no interest in anyone else," he told me when he emerged. "She's interested in the effect she has on you. When she thinks she sees her reflection in my eyes, and I respond, she's satisfied and changes the subject." He added, "She holds my attention because she's a movie star in my studio. That's my job. It's her job and it's my job for us to hold each other's attention. But the ones who *really* hold your attention are interested in you."

It wasn't long before Stone and Avedon were disagreeing about the dresses. Avedon got upset when Berger tried to intervene; words were exchanged; and Stone, as the *Post* noted the next day, got dressed and walked out, in protest over Avedon's treatment of Berger. It was apparent to me that there was regret all around. Stone finally called, and asked me to meet her at a restaurant on Fifth Avenue. As I left, Avedon said, "Tell her I'm keeping everybody here for an hour. Call me. Do you have quarters?" When I got to the restaurant, Stone said, "Oh, God. It was such a dream of mine to be photographed by him." Later, over the phone, the two stars patched things up, and Stone's limousine pulled up for the second time that day in front of Avedon's studio.

BY mid-February, Stone was making a tour of Western Europe to promote "Casino." I caught up with her one morning at the Dorchester Hotel, near Hyde Park, in London, where, in the rotunda of the ballroom, a scrum of photographers were penned in by blue cordons underneath a gilt cage of stuffed plumed birds, waiting for Stone to finish her "one-on-ones."

Stone was an hour late. Universal executives bantered with one another about what it might be like to live with Stone—a subject that has been as much on the star's mind as on the public's. By her own admission, Stone has never had a relationship that lasted longer than three years. "Roy London always said Sharon wouldn't be happy until she was with somebody who was trying to cure cancer," Craven says. "Somebody with a purpose larger than her." The comedian Garry Shandling, whom Stone dated briefly, worked the predicament into a segment of "The Larry Sanders Show" entitled "The Mr. Sharon Stone Show." Last year, Stone was home for nine days; the timetable makes romance difficult. "I have to go work now," she wrote to Craven when she was on location with "Casino." "I get proposed to tonight—no wonder I have a stomach ache and don't want to go. It's only a movie. This would give me more comfort somehow if I actually had a life."

"She's got five years or so," Mark Rydell says. "She's milking them. When she's forty-five, it'll be over for her, or she'll certainly lose the spin she has now." In the meantime "she has a strong drive to be a mother," Liz Lang, a high-school friend of Stone's, says. "I think it bothers her that she's not in a position where she can be." Stone, like all spellbinders, is trapped by the spell she casts.

"Hello. How are you? Thanks for turning up," she said to the assembled crowd as she appeared from a side door and the flash and pop of the tabloid feeding frenzy began. When Stone is angry, she is often accused by Mimi Craven of seeming "twelve feet tall and bulletproof"; when she's doing her elegant star turn, her proportions seem more or less the same.

After she'd charmed the skeptical British journalists, she was shepherded through the waiting crowd and into a limousine. "Lock the doors," she said as the car moved through the wedge of fans and photographers which blocked its way. Stone has been stalked, and she always travels with a compact, red-headed former reserve deputy sheriff named Kristin Marshall, who was riding shotgun in the limousine and keeping tabs on the "point" car and the "backup" car as we sped toward Camden Town for lunch. "I have worked with other celebrities, and there is a frenzy about Sharon's fans that you don't see with other actors, that makes them need to touch her," Marshall says. (Stone has discovered a new maneuver for getting people to let go of her hand. "May I please have my hand back?" she says.)

As we reached St. John's Wood, Marshall noticed that a green van had been following us. All over London, police had posted "Terrorists—Bombs—Be Alert" signs after a spate of I.R.A. bombings, and security had been ramped up everywhere. Marshall got on the phone, keeping her eyes on the rearview mirror. "Peter, we're gonna bang a right here, where it's illegal," she said. "You stay put and block them in. Meet us at the restaurant."

"Go. Go here," Marshall said to the driver. "Go. Go. Go."

We accelerated down the St. John's Wood High Street.

"He's coming," Stone said.

"Go down an alley," Marshall said.

We turned down a narrow corridor separating the creamy town houses, and the van suddenly spun into view at the opposite end of the alley.

"Fuck him," Stone said. "Get the cops on the phone."

Marshall looked behind her. "He's stuck!" she shouted. "He's stuck in the alley! Too wide!"

In the limo, everybody was whooping and laughing. Stone and Marshall high-fived each other. But we had gone only half a block when the van, its sides scraped, emerged and charged toward us. Stone became very still, her voice firm. "Pull over and stop the car," she said. "Stop here now. Get the police on the phone." Marshall got out of the car and walked toward the van.

"She'll kick his ass from one end of this town to the other," Stone said.

"I think they're photographers," Marshall said when she got back to the car. "Two carloads of photographers."

Three or four guards in black turtlenecks stood watch outside the restaurant while we ate lunch, and when we were done Stone said her goodbyes inside. Then the guards formed a phalanx around her on the empty street to put her in the limousine, and her victory cavalcade moved on.

"A REAL star never stops," Mae West once said. Her words came back to me as I walked home from lunch. Stone had all the markings of that diehard breed. She had willed herself into perpetual brightness. Her "Casino" cohort James Woods says, "You wonder—I mean, when all the glamour is gone and the lights are off, what's she like? The answer is, She glows in the dark." In public, Stone casts no shadow. "I'm not this stereotypical angst-ridden drama queen," she told me. "I'm just not. I'm digging my life. I'm happy." She reinforced the point by punching my shoulder. But no one seeks fame out of happiness. If you want to see Stone's shadow, you have to look nearby, at her friends. She embraces in others the qualities she won't allow in herself. Craven, who admits to being timid, uncertain, and afraid to take risks, says, "I'm the living part of her shyness. My defense is to be invisible; her defense is to become the most fabulous thing you ever saw in your entire life." According to Craven, "The negative does not exist for Sharon."

Stone is indeed an all-American success, hiding the all-American soullessness of her self-invention behind a show of optimism. "I'm thinking of these as my formative years," she says, consigning her two decades of struggle to oblivion. Craven predicted last December that Stone would win her Golden Globe. She also prophesied that Stone would be nominated for an Academy Award for "Casino" but would lose this year, and would win in 1997, for "Last Dance," in which Craven plays her best friend. "What if you're wrong?" Stone asked. Craven thought for a moment. "Take me to the Oscars," she said, "and if I'm wrong and you win, I'll start the Wave. I'll stand up in my Valentino dress and go 'I was wrong.' "

"My whole career is a gamble," Stone says, and, as every gambler knows, the greatest experience in life is winning a bet, and the second-greatest is losing one. Stone took the bet. ♦

"I felt that, too," I say. "I've felt that from the very start. A lack of mystery."

"Well, let's try one more. We're very close now. I can feel it."

On the sixth take, I burst in the door; discover the corpse; pause for a second; cross to the radio; pause again; then I smash the radio to the floor with my fist. I just coldcock the son of a bitch.

"Cut! Cut!" he says. "That's perfect! Absolutely perfect! That's the one. Print this one! It was perfect."

Just because they say "Action!" doesn't mean you have to do anything.
—*Marlon Brando.*

GARY COOPER OR THE LANDSCAPE

WHY don't you fly? I find that so fascinating.

—I don't know. I just don't.

—You drive everywhere?

—Yes. Or take trains.

—I love trains.

—Me, too.

—I used to take them all the time when I was a child, in Sweden. All over Europe.

—Yes. They rock you to sleep. Just like a mother.

—But say you have to be in Los Angeles suddenly. How do you get there?

—I never have to be anywhere suddenly.

—But your work—sometimes you must have to work in Los Angeles.

—Yes. Then I drive.

—Across the entire country?

—Right.

—How far is that?

—It's a long, long way.

—It must be thousands of miles.

—It is.

—So you've done this many times, I guess.

—Many, many times.

—I've always wanted to do this! I must try it sometime. I've heard so much about this country but never really seen it. You know—I mean other than New York and L.A.

—You *should* try it.

—Well, what do you do? Is there a particular route you take?

—Highway 40 west.

—Is that the main highway?

—Yes. It replaced the old Route 66. "Grapes of Wrath." Henry Fonda. You know—"Get your kicks on Route 66."

—I see. But aren't there little highways left that might be more interesting?

—What are you interested in?

—I mean, the main highway must be so synthetic, isn't it?

—They're all made out of asphalt.

—No, but I mean the surrounding areas. The little communities.

—There *are* no communities.

—But there must be some little towns left. Little side roads.

—They're all the same.

—Aren't there some that are more picturesque? More authentic.

—They're *all* authentic.

—I see. Well, where do you stay when you're on the road like that?

—I sleep in my truck.

—Oh, you have a truck?

—I do. Yes.

—I love trucks.

—Yeah. Trucks and trains.

—I just love them.

—*You* should get a truck.

—Oh, no!

—Why not? Get a truck and drive.

—No, no. I'd get so bored with myself, driving all that way alone. Don't you ever get bored?

—No.

—You travel all by yourself and you never get bored?

—Never.

—I don't know if I could stand it. All that way across the country. It's so huge! How many days does it take you?

—Five, usually. Depends. Sometimes I stop along the way.

—You must have a lot of girlfriends in different towns.

—Not anymore.

—Don't you get lonely?

—Sometimes.

—I would get so lonely, I think.

—Yeah. *You* probably shouldn't try it.

—Oh, but I must. I feel as though I'm missing out on something. Since I was a little girl I've dreamed about the West.

—In Sweden?

—Yes! Oh, yes. I used to have visions about it.

—Visions.

—Vistas would appear.

—Where did you hear about the West in Sweden?

—Movies. American movies. We see that great landscape in our dreams. It haunts us.

—So it's the landscape that grabs you more than the characters?

—Yes. That vast background.

—So in Sweden, when you're watching an American Western you're all staring at the background? Is that it?

—I suppose. It's so evocative to us. All that space. Sweden is very close.

—So it doesn't matter who's in the Western—it could be John Wayne or Jerry Lewis—because everyone's really captured by the landscape?

—Well, we love the actors, too, of course.

—Who's your favorite?

—Mine, personally?

—Yes. Do you have a favorite?

—I guess I would have to say Gary Cooper.

—The Coop!

—Oh, yes. He personified something, I think.

—What was that?

—Excuse me?

—That he "personified."

—Oh, I don't know. That wonderful mixture of shyness—how do you say it?—vulnerability, I suppose, and yet strong at the same time. It's very Western. Women love that.

—They do?

—Oh, yes. It's very attractive, I find.

—Why's that?

—I don't know. You're making me blush.

—I am?

—Yes. You know you are.

—You're embarrassed?

—No. Not exactly.

—But when you get right down to brass tacks, which is more important—Gary Cooper or the landscape?

—Oh, I would hate to have to choose between them.

—Say you had to. Say it was a question of life or death.

—I would have to say the landscape.

—There you go.

—But I love them both.

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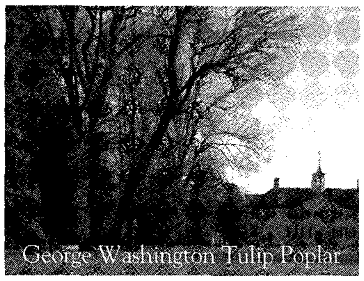

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tive ferry that makes two trips a day. There're four vehicles in the whole town, two telephones, one radio, and no TV whatsoever. The entire village has turned out to witness the invasion of the movie company. They stand in little tattered groups, holding their children high on their shoulders. They watch us unloading lighting equipment, sound equipment, camera equipment; equipment worth hundreds of thousands of American dollars. They listen to us speaking French, Italian, German, English, and Greek. They stare at our clothes. They watch us exactly as their children watch us; without judgment, with no animosity, just pure amazement. They giggle and point bashfully at the long blond hair of the grips from West Berlin. They stare at the tattoos and rock-and-roll T-shirts; the A.D.s running in circles, yelling into their mysterious little black walkie-talkies; the director, waving his arms and speaking four different languages; the soundman, trying to set up his Nagra in the shade of a giant banyan tree, unfolding his deck chair and striped umbrella. The tree is thick with long-tailed grackles, cackling and screaming in unison. The soundman removes his headphones and stares bewilderedly up into the horde of black birds. Someone inside a wood-slat shack with a grass roof turns on the only radio in town. A beautiful *corrido* ballad comes ringing out through the humid air, joining the sound of the grackles and the giggling children. The soundman throws up his hands in despair. The second A.D. is running full tilt again, across the plaza, toward the little wood shack where the radio is singing. She's yelling in Spanish at the shack: "*Silencio, por favor! Silencio!*" The radio keeps singing; the grackles keep screaming; the children keep giggling; the old men keep laughing; the women laugh at the old men; the young men laugh at the women. There is no crying. Not one child in the whole village is crying. The turkeys are gobbling; the pigs are grunting; the dogs are yapping; the roosters are crowing. Not one car is honking. Now the director is screaming "*Silencio!*" but the village sings on. Nothing can stop it, not even the movies.

An old *charro*, astride an even older horse with its ribs sticking out, stands in the middle of the dusty street, staring at us, with his leathery hands crossed on the saddle horn. The first A.D. asks him to move on, since he's right in the middle of the shot. The *charro* beats his old steed on the rump with a frayed shank of rope, then thumps him hard with his bare heels, but the horse only blinks. He just stands there with his ears drooped and refuses to budge. The whole village laughs. The director yells "*Silencio!*" The old *charro* thrashes his mount again, and the horse gives a couple of pathetic bucks, then walks on. The whole village cheers. The *charro* grins and tips his huge sombrero. The laughter goes on, ringing out into the jungle. The director suddenly changes his mind and wants the *charro* back. He thinks he might add something authentic to the background, but it's too late. The old man has disappeared into a mango grove, and the A.D.s can't find him. He's completely vanished.

THE camera's finally ready. We're filming a cockfight on the street in front of a dusty pharmacy. Me and Hendker are supposed to walk into the middle of it and inquire about an old friend we've been searching for. The cockfight is for real, except the spurs of the roosters are capped with little leather balls rather than fixed with blades, as they would be in an actual gambling match. A sand arena has been set up on the street for the contestants. The roosters are in place with their handlers. They thrust the fighting cocks toward each other, getting them worked up. Our little French focus puller steps into the sand ring between the two Mexican handlers. He's wearing tight Bermuda shorts and dainty black tennis shoes, and he's drawing the measuring tape out from the lens to the tip of his nose in three-foot increments. He places the tape under the nose of one of the Mexican handlers, who's cradling his rooster like a baby, stroking the luminous red and green feathers on its neck. The handler's mouth is full of water. He holds the rooster up, facing him, then spits the water on the rooster's face and under his wings, and all over the little French focus puller, who takes it very well. He's a good sport. He smiles politely at the Mexican handler, who's so absorbed in preparing his rooster that he hasn't noticed the results of his spitting. The focus puller makes a mark with his finger in the sand, right in front of the Mexican, then backs out of the ring, coiling his tape up and smiling the whole while. He makes a humble little bow as he exits and returns dutifully to the side of the camera, adjusting the lens. The Mexican handler looks down and notices the mark in the sand. He has no idea where it came from, but he wants the sand smooth for his fighting cock, so he erases it with the toe of his sandal. The focus puller looks up and notices his precise mark has disappeared. He can't figure it out. He reënters the ring, uncoils his tape measure again, and makes a brand-new mark in the sand, then exits the same way as before, bowing and smiling. Again, the Mexican erases his mark. The focus puller keeps smiling. This time he brings a small stick with him and sets that down as his mark. The Mexican tosses the stick out. Sticks are even worse than marks for fighting cocks.

When the fight finally gets under way, the shot keeps getting interrupted by the drunken owner of one of the roosters. He keeps stepping into the ring and cheering him on. The director tries to explain to the man that this isn't a real fight. It's just for the camera. But the man doesn't understand. He says his rooster, which he calls Colorado, always fights to the death. He's fought him in Texas, in Arizona, and all over Mexico, and he's always fought to the death. It will spoil him for future fights if he isn't allowed to kill his opponent. The director tells him this isn't possible in the movies. It's illegal to kill any animal for the movies. The owner gets offended and scoops his rooster up in his arms. He says "Colorado is not a coward!" and stomps off. The director apologizes, but the owner won't allow his rooster to continue under these circumstances. He staggers away, weaving down the dirt road with his proud rooster stuck under his armpit. He's turned his back on the movies. ♦

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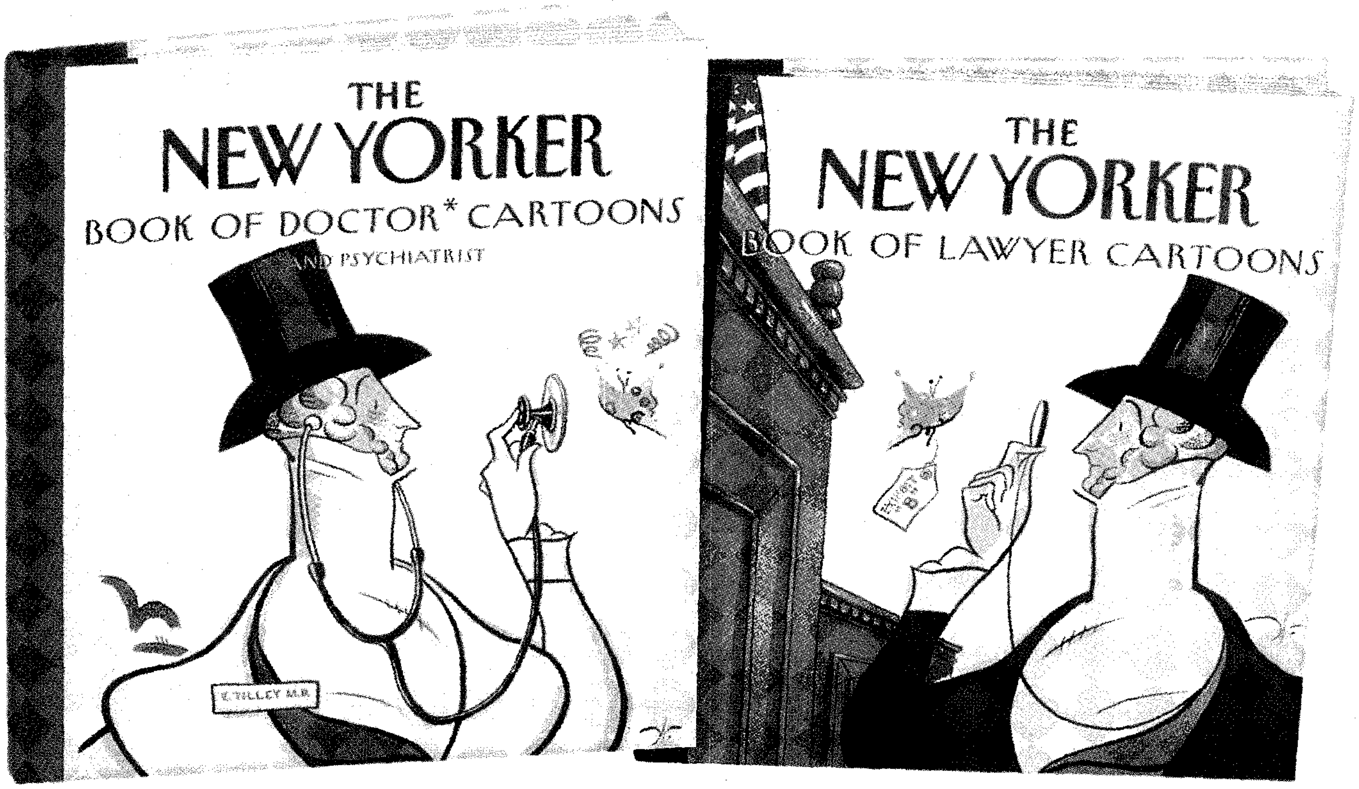
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OUR FAVORITE CYNIC

Will Ambrose Bierce ever get his due?

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

In a small but highly selective neighborhood in Hell reside the cynics, among whom Ambrose Bierce must surely have long ago taken up residence. His neighbors there are likely to include Juvenal, La Rochefoucauld, Chamfort, Swift, Heine, Strindberg, Mencken, and (a recent arrival) the Romanian-born French writer E. M. Cioran. If superior talk is your idea of a good time, it's not really such a bad place to end up, this neighborhood. "Heaven for climate," as J. M. Barrie once wrote. "Hell for company."

One of the reasons cynics deserve Hell is that most of them seem to have had a preternaturally good time on earth. If behind every comedian there is a sad, if not heartily depressed, figure, behind every cynic there is just as often someone laughing at the spectacle of human earnestness. "The poor wish only to be rich, which is impossible, not to be better," Bierce wrote. "They would like to be rich in order to be worse, generally speaking." How vicious, uncharitable, unsympathetic—indecent, really—and, alas, probably quite true! If it didn't often contain that kernel of obstinate, objectionable truth, cynicism would be of no interest whatsoever.

AMBROSE BIERCE

While the Civil War ended Bierce's idealism, it probably also gave birth to the writer in him.

WOJCIECH WOLYNSKI

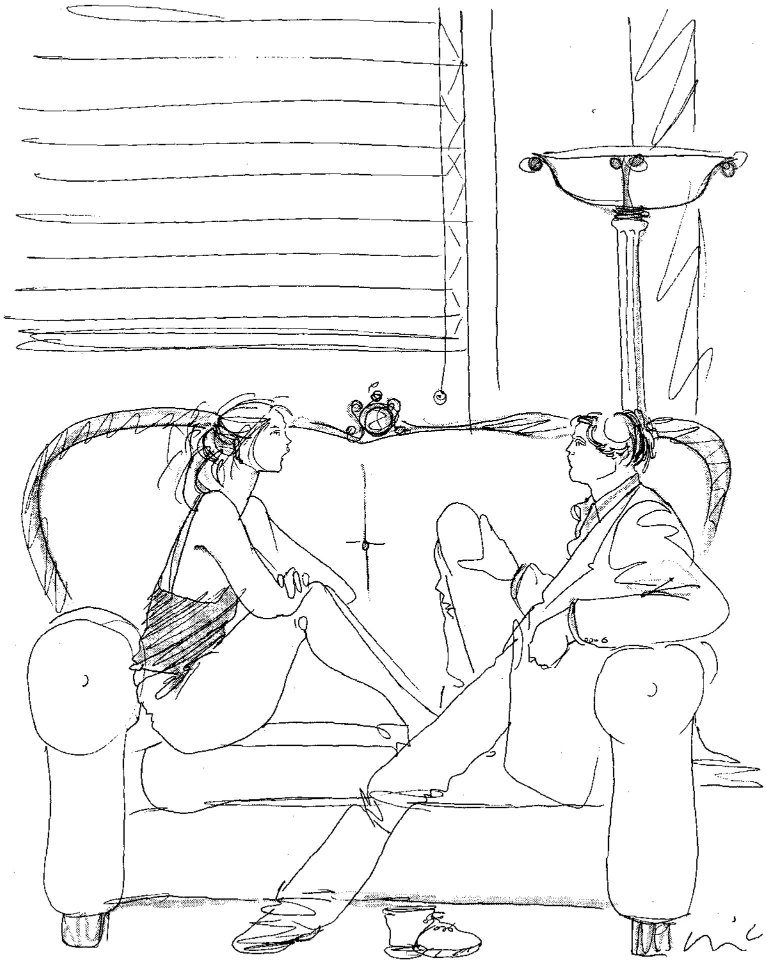
Ambrose Bierce is today best known for "The Devil's Dictionary" and the much anthologized short story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," and for everything that we do not know about his death. What we do know is that in 1913 Bierce, who was then seventy-one and was the country's most famous iconoclast, decided to chuck it all and see what was going on with Pancho Villa in Mexico. Endless are the theories of what became of him there, including one that holds that he never went to Mexico at all but killed himself in the Grand Canyon, which is the view favored by Roy Morris, Jr., in his new, workmanlike biography, "Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company" (Crown; $30).

Whether death was a good career move for Bierce is another much debated subject. Some say that the mystery of his death added to his legend—the legendary Bierce appears in Carlos Fuentes's novel "The Old Gringo" and the subsequent movie version, in which he is played by Gregory Peck—and that it has kept interest in his writing alive. Others say that the only effect of the legend has been to distract attention from where it belongs—on Bierce's writing, which carries its own vexing complications.

"It is only a question of time, and perhaps of not much time," Wilson Follett wrote of Bierce, "when we shall see him emerge from the mists of his legend and appear not only as an American writer of the very first stature, but also as a world figure." Follett made that prediction in 1937, and it hasn't come true yet. Years earlier, Bierce had written, in a letter to a friend, "How many times, and covering a period of how many years, must one's unexplainable obscurity be pointed out to constitute fame? Not knowing, I am almost disposed to consider myself the most famous of authors. I have pretty nearly ceased to be 'discovered,' but my notoriety as an obscurian may be said to be worldwide and apparently everlasting." Poor Bierce, he sounds like the poet Robert Southey, who was assured that his reputation would be secure long after Homer and Virgil were forgotten—but not until.

Cynics aren't born but made, and though the origin of Bierce's cynicism has been disputed, its depth has not. Even H. L. Mencken, a practitioner and genuine connoisseur of these matters, claimed, after spending time with Bierce, to have been appalled by the darkness of his views. Bierce said that, as a journalist, he was in the business of dispensing abuse, and at this he worked overtime. He may have been something of a Johnny-one-note, but with that single note his repertoire included ridicule, invective, vituperation, rage, and more than occasional fury. His steady hatred was mildly ameliorated only by his amusement at the passing travesty called the human show.

Whence did such cynicism derive? In "The Devil's Dictionary," which contains chiefly lexicographical entries, written in terse, sometimes aphoristic prose, the entry under "Birth" begins, "The first and direst of all disasters." Bierce's own birth wasn't really so dire, although he made it out to have been. He was born in 1842 in Horse Cave Creek, Ohio, the tenth child of Marcus Aurelius and Laura Bierce, all of whose children were given names beginning with the letter "A." English puritan in its genealogy and spirituality, the family moved when Ambrose was four to northern Indiana, where Marcus Bierce worked,



"Living with you has been a wonderful opportunity for me."

• •

not very successfully, at farming, among other trades. In later life, Bierce referred to his parents as "unwashed savages," which is laying it on with a crane: the father may not have had much business sense, but he was bookish, and the son had the run of his library. Bierce's real grudge seems to have been against his mother, the charge here being insufficient affection.

There is no entry in "The Devil's Dictionary" for "Mother"; had there been, it might have read, "First among betrayers." Certainly Bierce grew up in nothing like the suffocating atmosphere of ignorance, superstition, scandal, and shame that was visited upon Theodore Dreiser growing up in Indiana thirty-odd years later. Lack of love in the home may help but doesn't of itself qualify one for a lifetime of cynicism. Mencken was able to achieve his cynicism despite being something of a mother's boy.

Scratch a cynic and underneath, as often as not, you will find a dead idealist. Although he never spoke of it, Bierce's idealism apparently exhausted itself in his abolitionism. His family was abolitionist, and his Uncle Lucius, who as a lawyer and a political figure in northern Ohio was easily the most successful of the Bierces, was so ardent in his belief that he bragged of having supplied swords to John Brown and his fanatics for their raid on Harpers Ferry. Young Ambrose got a job, at sixteen, on an abolitionist newspaper in Warsaw, Indiana. Probably owing to his uncle's efforts, Bierce soon afterward spent a year at the Kentucky Military Institute. "It was here, presumably," Morris speculates in his biography, "that Bierce acquired his characteristic military bearing and the useful skills of draftsmanship and cartography that would stand him in good stead in the years to come."

The years to come were, of course, those of the Civil War. Bierce, at eighteen, was the second man in Elkhart County to sign up with the Ninth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment. No sensible cynic would even consider such an act. But Bierce did hard time in the war. He served as a foot soldier, a scout, and a topographical engineer. He was taken prisoner, but escaped. He fought in three of the war's bloodiest battles: Shiloh, Stones River, and Chickamauga. Leading a skirmish line at Kenesaw Mountain, in 1864, he took a bullet that left his head, as he later said, "broken like a walnut." By the war's end, he was a first lieutenant; he had been cited many times for bravery.

Bierce often said that a part of him died in the Civil War. That part, clearly, was the idealist. As a young soldier, he saw every kind of vanity and stupidity. He saw men with the power of rank send men without any power whatsoever to their certain deaths, chiefly to please yet other men, who would never fight for anything but the objects of their own ambition. He saw squalor and cowardice and death—and in wholesale lots. In "What I Saw of Shiloh," written in 1881, Bierce recounted how burned woodlands sent flaming leaves down on wounded soldiers, leaving them "in postures of agony that told of the tormenting flame. Their clothing was half burnt away—their hair and beard entirely; the rain had come too late to save their nails. Some were swollen to double girth; others shriveled to manikins. According to degree of exposure, their faces were bloated and black or yellow and shrunken."

While the Civil War ended Bierce's idealism (it did something similar to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who was severely wounded in it), it probably also gave birth to the writer in Bierce, even though he would not write directly about it until many years afterward. In that war, which he came to view as, at least partly, a time of grandeur, "when there was something new under the sun," he acquired memories that, like sins, could be expiated only through the secular form of confession known as literature.

If the Civil War may be said to have put the blacking on Bierce's general outlook, his career in journalism supplied the polish. At the war's end, Bierce pushed on out West on a fact-finding tour of Army posts under his former commander, Major General William B. Hazen. At the tour's end, Bierce remained in San Francisco, first taking a job at the United States Mint, then falling—lapsing, he might have said—into journalism. In 1871, he married Mollie Day, the daughter of a successful mine owner. The couple went off to London for three years, where he sharpened his writer's skills at humor magazines with names like *Fun* and *Figaro*. Apart from an unsuccessful attempt to manage a mine in the Black Hills, near Deadwood, in what was then the Dakota Territory, and a ten-year stint toward the end of his career working for William Randolph Hearst in Washington, D.C., Bierce spent the better part of his days in journalism in San Francisco.

Working on various papers there, he wrote columns under such rubrics as "Town Crier" and "Prattle," in which he knocked off sketches of West Coast types and blasted anyone he damn well pleased. In those days—the late eighteen-sixties and the early eighteen-seventies—a journalist was well advised to carry a gun, for people did then to journalists what they only wish to do now: they shot them. (Bierce toted a loaded Colt revolver after insulting, in print, the actress wife of a man named Henry Widmer.) Bierce also wrote some fairly forgettable verse, and essays for *The Overland Monthly*, then edited by Bret Harte. His recent reading in the classics and in English literature was rather too prominently on display in his early writing. This would change.

What wouldn't change was his utter comfort and ease while on the attack. He seemed to be happiest when letting his most bitter sentiments rip. He wrote *de haut en bas*, casting, as he might have averred, artificial pearls before real swine. The man Bierce had made himself into was an aristocrat of the mind: high, haughty, magisterially amused at the spectacle of the rabble—rich and poor rabble alike—swirling below. Even so, as Roy Morris makes clear, he tended to take the side of the underdogs, the Mormons among them. "Excepting the Jews and the Chinese," Bierce wrote, "I know no worthier large class of people than they." In most conflicts of his time, he took his place far above the ruck, always saving a sufficiency of cold contempt for "that immortal ass, the average man." It wasn't at all a bad show.

Although Bierce was the father of three children, he was not, unsurprisingly, much of a family man. He lived with his wife only intermittently, and when he discovered that she was interested in another man he separated from her, announcing, "I don't take part in competitions—not even for the favor of a woman." The older of his two sons killed himself over the loss of a girl when he was not yet seventeen; the other son died, of alcoholism, at twenty-six. Bierce was thus twice a member of the sad society of those who have buried their own children. These events doubtless chilled further his already bleak views. Still, he continued, warning his enemies that he was around for the duration: "While the public buys my rebuking at twice the price your sycophancy earns—while I keep a conscience uncorrupted by religion, a judgment undimmed by politics and patriotism, a heart untainted by friendships and sentiments unsoured by animosities—while it pleases me to write, there will be personalities in journalism, personalities of condemnation as well as commendation."

Some feel that Bierce wasted his talent in journalism; others feel that his talent was precisely for journalism. The latter cite his brilliant attacks on the big four of California capitalism—Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Charles Crocker, and, especially, Collis P. Huntington, the Southern Pacific Railroad man. Huntington, it is said, once asked Bierce to name his price to leave him alone. "My price is seventy-five million dollars," Bierce responded, referring to the railroad's public indebtedness, which Huntington and his lobbyists were attempting to avoid. "If, when you are ready to pay, I happen to be out of town, you may hand it over to my friend, the Treasurer of the United States."

Bierce might have remained no more than another cut-and-slash journalist and critic but for a revival of his interest, in the late eighteen-eighties, in the Civil War, which, as Morris recounts, "began a remarkable three-year stretch of creative endeavor, one that, within the limits of its author's narrow but not inconsiderable talents, has seldom been surpassed in American literature." During this period, Bierce wrote "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," "Chickamauga," and many of the other stories in his 1892 collection, "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians."

M. E. GRENANDER, who is Bierce's most intelligent critic, has rightly remarked that Bierce "has always hovered on the margins of America's literary canon." Part of the reason is that Bierce was never a very careful caretaker of his own career. He published badly, often bringing out trivial books or not finding good publishers for his better books, and

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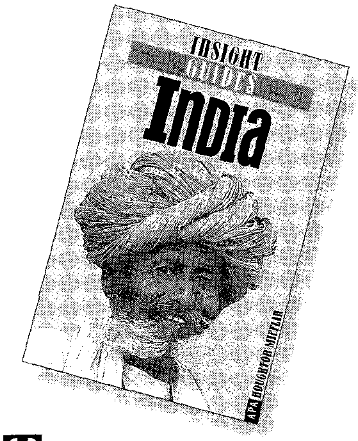

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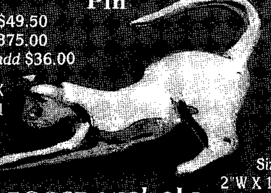

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then, in 1909, late in his life, he allowed a friend to talk him into amassing a twelve-volume "Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce." This packed the best and the rather ampler worst of his writing in one place. In 1946, Clifton Fadiman brought out a single volume, "The Collected Writings of Ambrose Bierce," which, at eight hundred and ten pages, went a long way toward slimming things down, yet, in presenting all of "The Devil's Dictionary," and filling the remainder of the book with Bierce's sometimes quite negligible stories, it, too, gave a less than complimentary view of Bierce's particular—perhaps one should say, instead, peculiar—talent.

Bierce would be an important figure if only for the lines of influence he radiated, both as a writer of fiction and as a journalist. As the first American to write dispassionately and precisely—which is to say truthfully—about war, Bierce influenced Stephen Crane (who in "The Red Badge of Courage" wrote the great Civil War novel, even though he was born six years after its conclusion) and also Ernest Hemingway. Crane said that "nothing better exists" than Bierce's story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." Bierce, in his habitual manner of returning a compliment, once said he "thought that there could only be two worse writers than Stephen Crane, namely two Stephen Cranes."

The other line of influence that becomes immediately apparent is that extending from Bierce to Mencken. Mencken was much smarter than Bierce about managing his career. But the two men held in common an ability to twirl the knout with stylish dexterity, smashing whatever it took their fancy to smash. Mencken wrote of Bierce, "He was the first American to lay about him with complete gusto, charging and battering the frauds who ranged the country."

Literary influence is one thing, actual literature another. Did he write anything that still lives? Yes, if one concedes that he needs to be taken, like all strong purgatives, in careful dosages. Read too much of him and his cynicism seems too consistent, too predictable, too easy, almost as if it had been written on automatic pilot. Clifton Fadiman, after acknowledging Bierce's talent as "a minor prophet of hopelessness," put it well: "He is a pessimism-machine. He is a Swift minus true intellectual power, Rochefoucauld with a bludgeon, Voltaire with stomach-ulcers." Even his stories come to seem a rather rote performance.

These stories, almost all of which are less than ten pages in length, are splendidly exact in the telling. Bierce relied little on the layering of subordinate clauses or the embellishment of elaborate punctuation; his sentences seem so many obedient soldiers, at attention and smartly turned out, each understanding its assigned task. Almost every Bierce story turns on a grotesque twist at the close. He had an insatiable appetite for the ghastly. Whether about the Civil War or about civilian life, a Bierce story reads as if it were sired by O. Henry out of Hubert Selby, Jr. Read them all and you feel as if you had read one, as Kenneth Tynan once wrote about the plays of Ionesco.

The most horrific Bierce story, "Chickamauga," is about a deaf-mute child who mistakes the stream of blood-soaked soldiers returning from the battle for a bizarre circus parade of sorts, which he, with a wooden sword, sets out to lead. All goes along grotesquely enough till the close, when the child is excited by a fire that turns out to be flames from his own house, outside which he discovers a female body: "The greater part of the forehead was torn away, and from the jagged hole the brain protruded, overflowing the temple, a frothy mass of gray, crowned with clusters of crimson bubbles—the work of a shell." The body, no regular reader of Bierce would be much surprised to learn, is that of the child's mother. All that remains is the child's strangled cry—"something," Bierce almost gleefully reports, "between the chattering of an ape and the gobbling of a turkey."

Imagine the worst and you will have grasped the ending of almost every one of Bierce's Civil War stories: a man shoots his father, twin brothers kill each other, one officer kills his dearest friend, another fires artillery on his own house and family—all in the line of duty. In Bierce's ghost stories, one character after another kills himself out of fear. Sometimes a comedy of understatement crops up. "Early one June morning in 1872," the story "An Imperfect Conflagration" begins, "I murdered my father—an act which made a deep impression on me at the time." Another, with the title "My Favorite Murder," begins, "Having murdered my mother under circumstances of singular atrocity, I was arrested and put upon my trial, which lasted seven years." Neither these nor, alas, many of Bierce's other stories manage to stay long in the mind, chiefly because Bierce, in his fiction, was so little interested in character, or even in psychology. Nearly all his stories are devoted to demonstrating the hopelessness of humankind, which is ultimately and everywhere the victim of a plan it doesn't come close to understanding.

FLAT FIX
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EXACTLY what this plan is Bierce never spells out, except to make plain that men and women are its dupes and never more dupish than when they think they are not. He makes this general point in all its powerful particularity throughout "The Devil's Dictionary," a work that still gives off many of those sharp, unpleasant pings of truth which most people would prefer not to hear. Sometimes it is nicely comical, as in the definition of "urbanity," which is "the kind of civility that urban observers ascribe to dwellers in all cities but New York"; or as in the definition of "self-esteem," which is "an erroneous appraisement."

More often, "The Devil's Dictionary" is given over to flaying the thick skin covering human illusions. Thus, "liberty" is "one of Imagination's most precious possessions"; "politics" is "a strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles"; "happiness"—shades of La Rochefoucauld here—is "an agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another"; a "conservative" is "a statesman who is enamoured of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others"; and "year" is "a period of three-hundred-and-sixty-five disappointments."

The larger vision that emerges from "The Devil's Dictionary" features Bierce's scorn for marriage, family, sex, religion, government, politics, law, journalism, philosophy, most scholarship, and all art, served up with the least pretension. Much of this may have been the reflex action of a lifelong provocateur, for in the end the style a person takes on can become his dominant—in fact, domineering—reality. Yet Bierce did indisputably hold the dark views he promulgated in his writings.

It is far from clear that these views made his life miserable. Bierce, as Morris notes, was full of contradictions. Although he ceaselessly mocked women in print, he tended to be courtly and kind to the women he encountered in life. Anti-capitalist though he was, he thought socialism little more than a joke. He hated war, yet looked back on his own soldiering days as among the finest of his life. He found it easier to be kind to strangers—among them aspiring young writers—than to those he loved. Believing that the lot of human beings could not be improved didn't prevent him from staying on the attack against those who he thought were out to make it still worse.

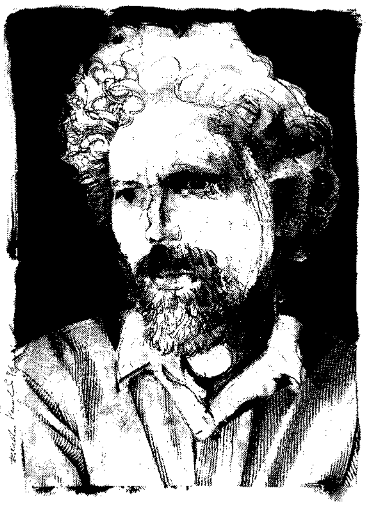
What does it take to make a cynic smile? Watching the rest of us struggle for either personal or social improvement generally turns the trick. The largest smile of all, perhaps, is reserved for attempts to obtain justice, which—so your own neighborhood cynic will be delighted to inform you—simply isn't available. Going against their subject's own grain, the small cadre of critics and biographers who have been writing about Bierce since his death have, for more than eighty years now, been trying to bring him some kind of rough literary justice. At odd intervals, his work gets revived, though generally in a low key: a volume of critical essays about him is published; Edmund Wilson devotes a rather dismissive chapter to him in "Patriotic Gore"; a book of his poems is brought out; new biographies appear. None of it, however, to much avail, which probably wouldn't have surprised Bierce. He thought posthumous fame the greatest joke of all. "The invention of a humorist," he called it, adding, "If the gods ever laugh, do they not laugh at that?"

Were he alive, Bierce might well be perfectly satisfied with his current position in American literature—as a secondary figure, an odd man out, a curiosity set in a dark lacquer cabinet somewhere along the back wall. It would not suit his Olympian detachment, after all, to be highly regarded by those whom his views required him to despise. Even if the world took Ambrose Bierce for a great writer, it still wouldn't undermine his cherished belief in its profound and immitigable idiocy. ◆

BRETT AGAIN

The story of a daughter who died well.

BY ANDREW SOLOMON



Douglas Hobbie

THE art of losing is hard to master, and Douglas Hobbie's "Being Brett: Chronicle of a Daughter's Death" (Holt; $22.50) is a valiant struggle for such command. The book begins with Brett's discovery of a lump her second year out of Smith and recounts the rocky sequence of near-cures and thwarted hopes, chemotherapies and bone-marrow procedures, generously honest and cruelly honest doctors. It also describes the close lesbian relationship that saw her through the abandonment of her new life, in San Francisco, for the landscape of her past; Brett lived out her final months between the family house in Conway, Massachusetts, and a light-filled apartment in Northampton. What is most compelling about "Being Brett" is the trajectory of the events related: Brett Hobbie had the rare gift of being ennobled by disease, and between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-seven she became steadily more remarkable and steadily more ill, so that by the time she died the loss was even more unbearable than could have been anticipated. She confronted Hodgkin's disease with tough intelligence and lots of humor and a certain lyrical wistfulness. Her father

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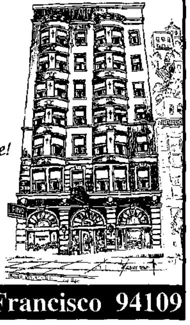
cannot equal that tone, but he can report it. You feel that, in his stolid, affectionate way, he has missed some of the picture, but one accomplishment of his book is that it allows that insight.

We hunger for elegies to rationalize disease's modern rituals, encomiums to insure that what is lost is not forgotten. Our fascination with such work is both sentimental and ghoulish, but the texts must not be either. The most powerful fact of the writing here is Hobbie's ambivalence about it. He knows only too well that this evocation serves therapeutic purposes of his own, and that a professionally successful elegy has its morally dubious aspect. His voice is also shot with a larger uneasiness and guilt, as though he were begging you to believe that he tried his hardest, ventured his best, loved as fully as he could. The visible striving might under other circumstances seem awkward, but here it is simply moving: this book is also the narrative of what a father did in the face of the senseless fact that he went on living when his daughter did not.

Despite annoying stylistic tics—maudlin italics, a self-conscious use of the third-person pronoun to denote the first-person narrator, a heavy post-Hemingway flatness in the detailing of emotionally charged events—Hobbie's prose gets swept up by what he is saying, and often arrives at a disarming clarity of expression. Few authors can with such honesty render the profundity of their own love. The antepenultimate chapter, called "Home," describes a miraculous final summer, when suddenly, for a moment, Brett was nearly free of symptoms and gave herself over to her family and friends. By then, not the fruit of experience but experience itself was her goal, and Hobbie's attempt to linger in that moment by recounting its hallowed commonplaces achieves the same ecstasy that must have characterized the season.

At times, you almost wish that you didn't have the mediating voice of Douglas Hobbie, that you could just hear from Brett herself. But that is because her father has conjured her so vividly and immensely, and with so much palpable adoration, that she seems more real even than he does. "I don't want to be a person again. It's too painful," Brett said shortly before her death. In this uncommon memoir, she is a person again, and it's both painful and vital. ♦



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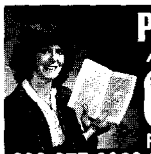

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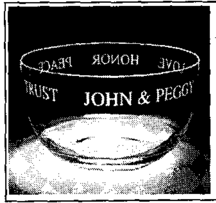

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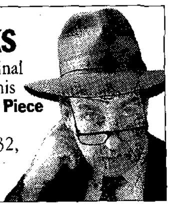

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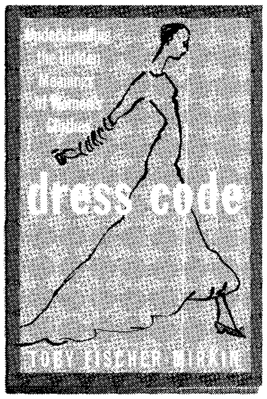

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BRIEFLY NOTED

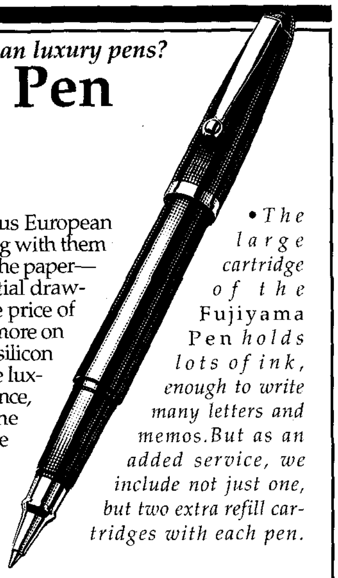
ST. FAMOUS, by Jonathan Dee (Doubleday; $22.95). Paul Soloway, a struggling, self-obsessed writer, is assaulted during a race riot by a black man named Victor Hartley. When Paul returns home from the hospital, he finds that unwanted fame opens more wounds than his assailant's lead pipe did. Both Paul and Victor—a responsible family man as well as a symbol of ghetto rage—are unlikely and accidental heroes; their real foes are the reporters, literary agents, editors, producers, and celebrity lawyers who turn their modest dreams inside out. Dee portrays these circling vultures with Audubon-like precision and flair.

SHIP FEVER AND OTHER STORIES, by Andrea Barrett (Norton; $21). European gentry, wild American sisters, and smart, starving immigrants populate these stories, which rove over centuries and include family legacies, folk remedies that anticipate official science, and experiments in alchemy. The title novella is devastating: as with every story here, you enter right into it, and cannot entirely leave it behind.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS, by Nora Sayre (Rutgers; $37.95). Subtle and personal, Sayre's memoir is American social history at its most attractive and persuasive. Her upbringing in New York was literary, glamorous, and wholly apolitical; her Radcliffe education emphasized a dedication to high art. It was only later, in London, that she encountered Americans who had been blacklisted during the Red Scare. Her memories of these rich Hollywood exiles are not too kind and not too mean but just right. And in her last chapter she visits Columbus, Ohio, her father's home town, and discovers the smug, hospitable America that he and his friend James Thurber fled.

GOD'S CHINESE SON, by Jonathan D. Spence (Norton; $27.50). In 1836, twenty-two-year-old Hong Xiuquan failed the civil-service examinations in Canton and came across some Christian tracts. When he later fell sick and had visions, he became convinced that he was the Christian God's second son, destined to rule a "heavenly kingdom" on earth. Many were attracted to Hong's egalitarian policies—despite his enforced separation of the sexes—and his sect prospered. But its attempts to overthrow the Qing dynasty resulted in unprecedented bloodshed: twenty million people died before the uprising was defeated, in 1864. Spence's present-tense narrative is riveting, and Hong's desperate bowdlerizations of the Old Testament provide welcome comic relief.

REST FOR THE WICKED, by Glyn Maxwell (Bloodaxe/Dufour; $16.95). Brash and theatrical, this collection, by one of England's brightest New Generation Poets, revels in its formal and thematic hubris—for these jaunty, accessible poems are mostly about boys and men who tread the boards of a nation in decline. Maxwell's England lives and dies in its boroughs, where the poet plays to the pub crowd in Welwyn Garden City: "For here you sit in the foreground of the world. /And what you sing in the dark is the plain song / Of men alone."



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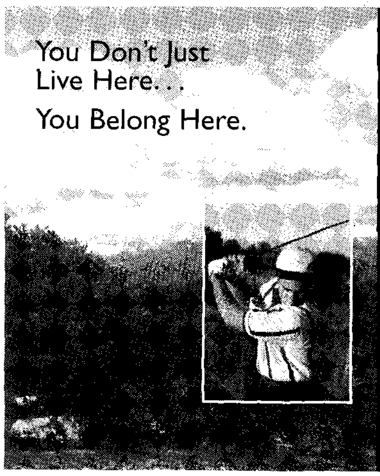

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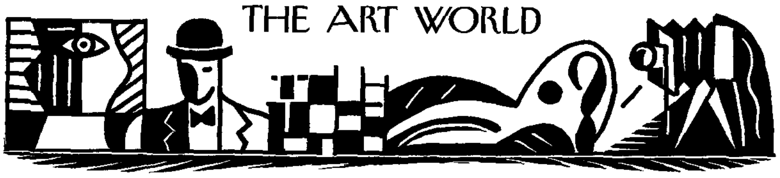


THE ART WORLD

TOTAL ABSTRACTION

The Guggenheim spotlights the achievements and limits of abstract art.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

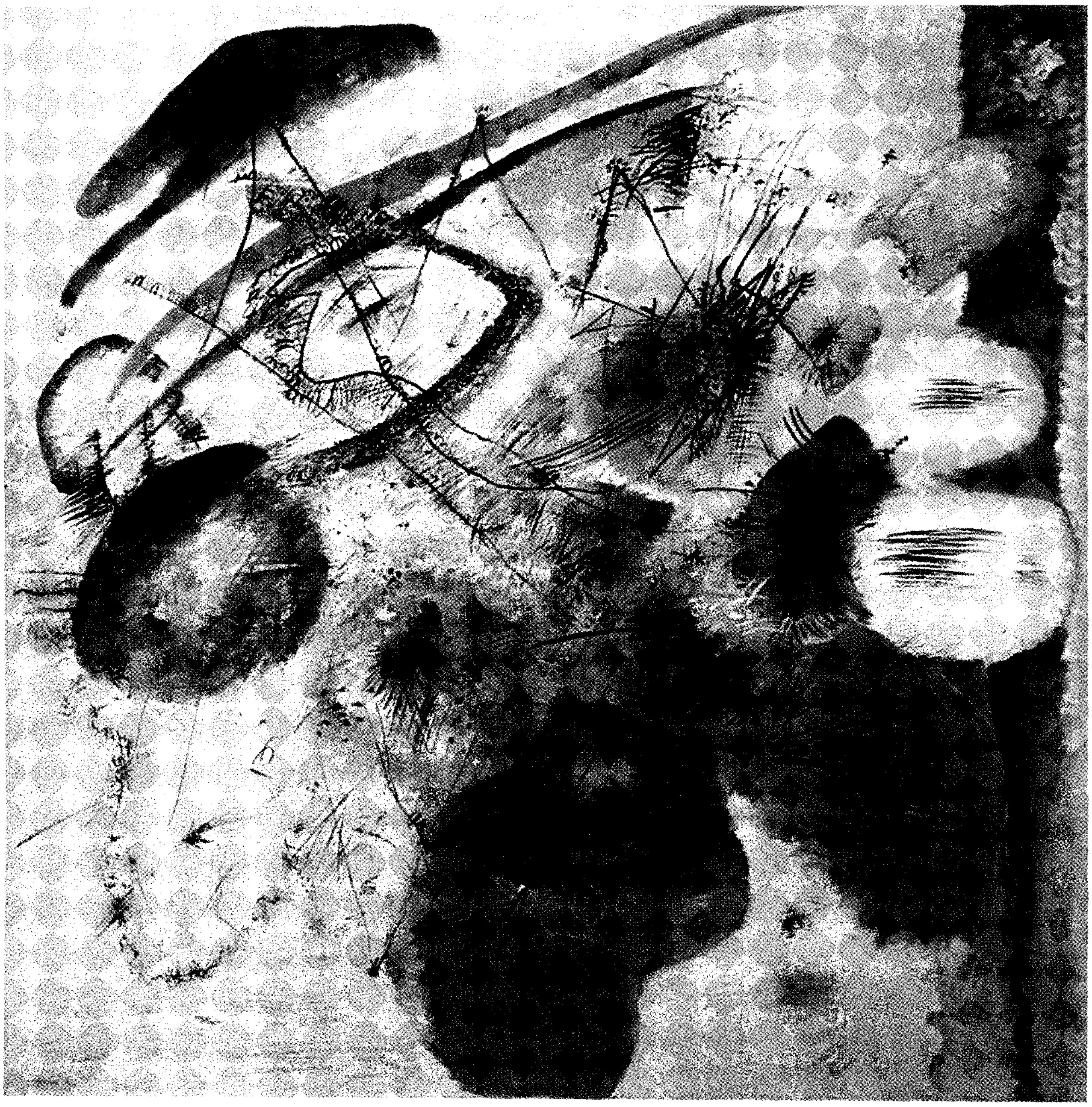
WHEN Frank Stella first started to paint, as a student at Phillips Academy, Andover, in the early fifties, it did not occur to him to paint recognizable images. "I thought abstract art had happened, and artists had stopped painting any other way," he once told me. Stella became one of the most deeply admired American artists of his generation—a painter whose ability to push his talent and take incredible risks sometimes seemed to validate the integrity of contemporary abstraction. Around the midpoint of his career, though, in the early eighties, he began to feel that the great promise of abstract art was not being fulfilled, and this made him wonder whether abstract art was dying out. "What's the real, compelling reason for abstraction to exist?" he asked himself. He decided to address this issue directly, in a series of lectures that he had been invited to give at Harvard in 1983 and 1984. In order to restore abstract art's vitality, he argued, contemporary artists must find ways to make it "real" by creating new kinds of pictorial space and pictorial drama. Just how that could be done was not very clear to some of his listeners, this one included, and there is some doubt as to whether Stella himself, in his work since then, has managed to follow his own prescription.

A comparable sense of doubt hangs over "Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline," the fascinating and frequently gorgeous exhibition that has been assembled at the Guggenheim Museum. (It will be there through May 12th, and it will not travel.) Mark Rosenthal, the curator of twentieth-century art at the National Gallery, in Washington, who organized the show and wrote the long and impressive catalogue essay, has been thinking about the subject for more than twenty years. Postponed twice by the Guggenheim—first for lack of a sponsor (Philip Morris eventually picked up the tab) and then because of scheduling conflicts—this is the first museum exhibition ever to focus on abstract art as a continuous, century-long movement. What Rosenthal has given us is an exhilarating survey of the high points of abstract art. The show is built around twenty-seven major artists whose work is presented in some depth, plus twenty-two who are represented by single works that Rosenthal considers of vital importance to the story of abstraction. A lot of people will judge the results mainly on the basis of who was left out (Paul Klee, Brice Marden) and who was wrongfully included. That's too bad, because it can only draw attention away from the glory of what is there, and from the many questions that the show should stir up in people's minds.

Why, for example, if abstract art is the defining style of the twentieth century, have so many of the century's important artists decided to use it selectively, peripherally, or not at all?

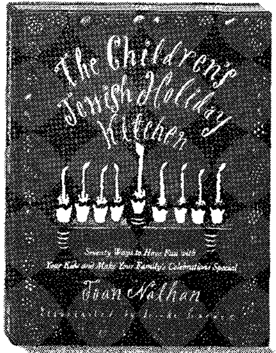
Clearly foreshadowed in the later paintings of Cézanne, Gauguin, Monet, and several other Post-Impressionists—paintings in which the world of appearances becomes increasingly subordinate to the artist's conceptual design—the urge to abstraction gathered critical momentum in the first two decades of this century. Each new development seemed to prepare the way for it. Fauvism freed color from its descriptive function. Cubism dematerialized the object, enabling artists to paint, as Picasso said, "not what you see but what you know is there." Artist after artist, fed up with art's once-removed status as an imitation of something else, took up the Symbolists' call for a visual art that would have the direct emotional appeal of music. But how could art become a real thing in itself while it was still subservient to the world of appearances? When the break did come—in 1911 and 1912 with Kandinsky, Kupka, and Delaunay, and a few years later with Malevich and Mondrian—it had the force and conviction of historical necessity. There is nothing tentative about the pioneer works on the lower levels of the Guggenheim spiral. (In this show, you start at the bottom and work up.) At the recent Mondrian retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, you could follow the artist step by step as he left representation behind; here the artists have already crossed what Mondrian called "the edge of an abyss," and art is in a new place.

Although to the pioneers that crossing may have seemed inevitable, it was not inevitable at all. Picasso and Braque went right up to the abyss's edge in their analytical Cubist paintings of 1908 and 1909, but they never did go over it, and neither did Matisse, and their refusal to abandon the world of appearances completely now looks as significant as Kandinsky's and Malevich's decision to go all the way. "Abstract art is only painting," Picasso said some years later, adding, "What about drama?" Abstraction's incipient weakness was its tendency to become formal and academic—or, worse, merely decorative. For most of the artists who followed the call of historical necessity, abstraction did not lead to the promised land of new truths and new freedoms. What happened in the period between the two World Wars was that Picasso, Léger, Braque, and other vastly influential artists used abstraction as a compositional element in works that were not really abstract, while the movement itself—pure abstraction, or non-objective art, as it was sometimes called—went into its first long decline.



"Black Lines," by Vasily Kandinsky (1913).

It was reborn in New York in the forties. That is the consensus, at any rate, and the Guggenheim show makes the point with dazzling authority. Rosenthal's selec-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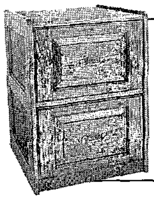

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tion of works by Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko, Still, and Newman is the high point of the exhibition for me—especially the five great Rothkos, each one isolated in its own space, with the stacked rectangles of saturated color perfectly lit and so radiant that they almost make you forget Frank Lloyd Wright's diabolical scheme to keep Guggenheim viewers off balance. For abstract art to succeed, as Rosenthal notes more than once in his catalogue essay, it has to be imbued with "something else"—the spiritual dimensions that Kandinsky and Mondrian sought in their painting, Malevich's "supremacy of pure feeling," or, in the case of the New York Abstract Expressionists, a belief in the direct transfer of emotion to canvas. The New York artists talked a great deal about the importance of "the subject" in their work. They could be pretty pompous about it at times. Rothko said that the only thing he cared about was "the expression of man's basic emotions—tragedy, ecstasy, doom," and Newman described painting as "a living voice, which, when I hear it, I must let it speak, unfettered." Yet, if the "something else" that these artists were after sometimes turned out to be less exalted and more personal than tragedy or doom, it kept them working at a very high level, and their art holds up sensationally: it looks as inevitable today as Kandinsky's or Mondrian's. The salvation of abstract art by the New York School was not, however, a long-term proposition. A second generation of New York artists turned Abstract Expressionism into a manner, and then a mannerism; it was parodied with devastating effect by the Pop artists, who gave figurative painting an unexpected boost in the sixties; and, before the sixties were over, it had become an international cliché. Once again, abstract art seemed to be in danger of dying out.

It has found any number of new saviors since then, but no clear agenda or rationale for existing. Frank Stella, who burst onto the scene in 1959 with a series of large canvases showing broad black stripes and nothing else, wanted everyone to know that there was no "something else" to look for in his work. "I always get into arguments with people who want to retain the old values in painting—the humanistic values that they . . . find on the canvas," he said in a 1964 radio interview. "If you pin them down, they always end up asserting that there is something there besides the paint on the canvas. My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there *is* there. . . . What you see is what you see." Stella's impersonal, matter-of-fact literalism became one of the cornerstones of minimal art. Its influence shows up at the Guggenheim in Carl Andre's stacked timbers, firebricks, and square zinc plates; in Donald Judd's wall-mounted galvanized-iron boxes; and in Dan Flavin's single white fluorescent-light tube. The more lyrical side of minimalism, meanwhile, is represented by Robert Ryman's virtuoso variations on the white square; by Agnes Martin's hushed, perfectly balanced grids of pencilled or painted lines; and by a mini-retrospective of Ellsworth Kelly's shaped canvases, one of which—a subtly curved blue triangle, nearly sixteen feet long—makes you think, quite non-abstractly, of a bird in flight.

These are beautiful works, and they can be enjoyed as such, without theories or explanations to back them up. The doubts persist, though, and they increase as you come nearer to the present day. Rosenthal stops short of the most recent generation; the youngest artist in the show is Richard Long, a fifty-year-old Englishman, whose huge wall drawings fill a large gallery on the top level. But it is clear that for all the artists whose work dates from the sixties or later abstraction has ceased to be a movement or a cause. It is not even an exclusive modus operandi for some of them. Yves Klein did monochrome paintings, several of which are on view, but he also did "anthropometries"—images imprinted by nude women who pressed their paint-slathered bodies (under Klein's supervision) to large sheets of paper. Gerhard Richter, whose three large abstract paintings at the Guggenheim carry echoes of first-generation Abstract Expressionism, also paints figurative landscapes. It could even be argued that the "environmental" works by Richard Long and Robert Smithson, which are made of rocks, mud, and other natural materials, are so closely linked to the real world that they are not abstract at all.

THE question that kept coming to my mind as I circled upward on the Guggenheim spiral was whether the idea of abstraction has any meaning today, when there are virtually no restrictions on the materials or the methods of art and no agreement about the purpose of aesthetic activity. By getting rid of the "something else" in abstract art, Stella was probably responding to a historical necessity of some kind; otherwise his example could not have influenced so many other artists. At any rate, since the sixties, abstract art has tended to be increasingly literal, impersonal, and "real" (in the sense of refusing to allude to anything outside itself), and a great deal of it has been tremendously boring. Some artists have struggled heroically to break out of the trap that this form of realism imposes. Richard Serra, whose two monolithic propped metal-slab sculptures dominate the ground floor of the Guggenheim, brought a note of overwhelming physical presence and danger into post-minimal sculpture. Stella continues to search for new forms of pictorial space and pictorial drama, and his recent work has finally taken him from three-dimensional, deep-relief painting into sculpture; the chaotic welded sculptural installation that he made specially for this exhibition fills an entire bay, but it is not, to my mind, a success. Large scale, which was one of the Abstract Expressionists' main contributions to modern abstraction, sometimes conveys nothing more than heavy lifting.

The most poignant piece in the show is in the last gallery. It is a free-form tangle of latex-coated rope, suspended from the ceiling and the walls by wires, and it is by Eva Hesse, the German-born post-minimalist whose amazing career was cut short, by cancer, in 1970. Hesse diverged from the hard-edged minimal aesthetic by using eccentric, unstructured materials (rope, cheesecloth, fibreglass) in ways that implied organic or visceral forms. She described what she was looking for as "non art, non connotive, non anthropomorphic, non geometric, non nothing," and as "everything, but of another kind, vision, sort." A year before she died, she wrote of trying to get to it through "total risk, freedom, discipline," and that is the phrase that Rosenthal has used as the subtitle of his exhibition. It sounds very much like the other dimension, the something else, that is lacking in most of what passes for abstract art today. Art, after all, does have to evoke—or at least suggest—a world outside itself, but the history of abstraction suggests that this can be done consistently, in abstract terms, only by very great artists. ♦

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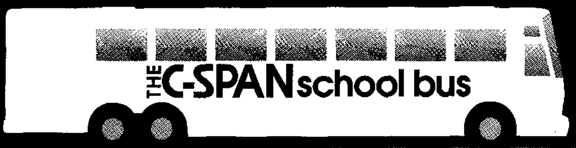

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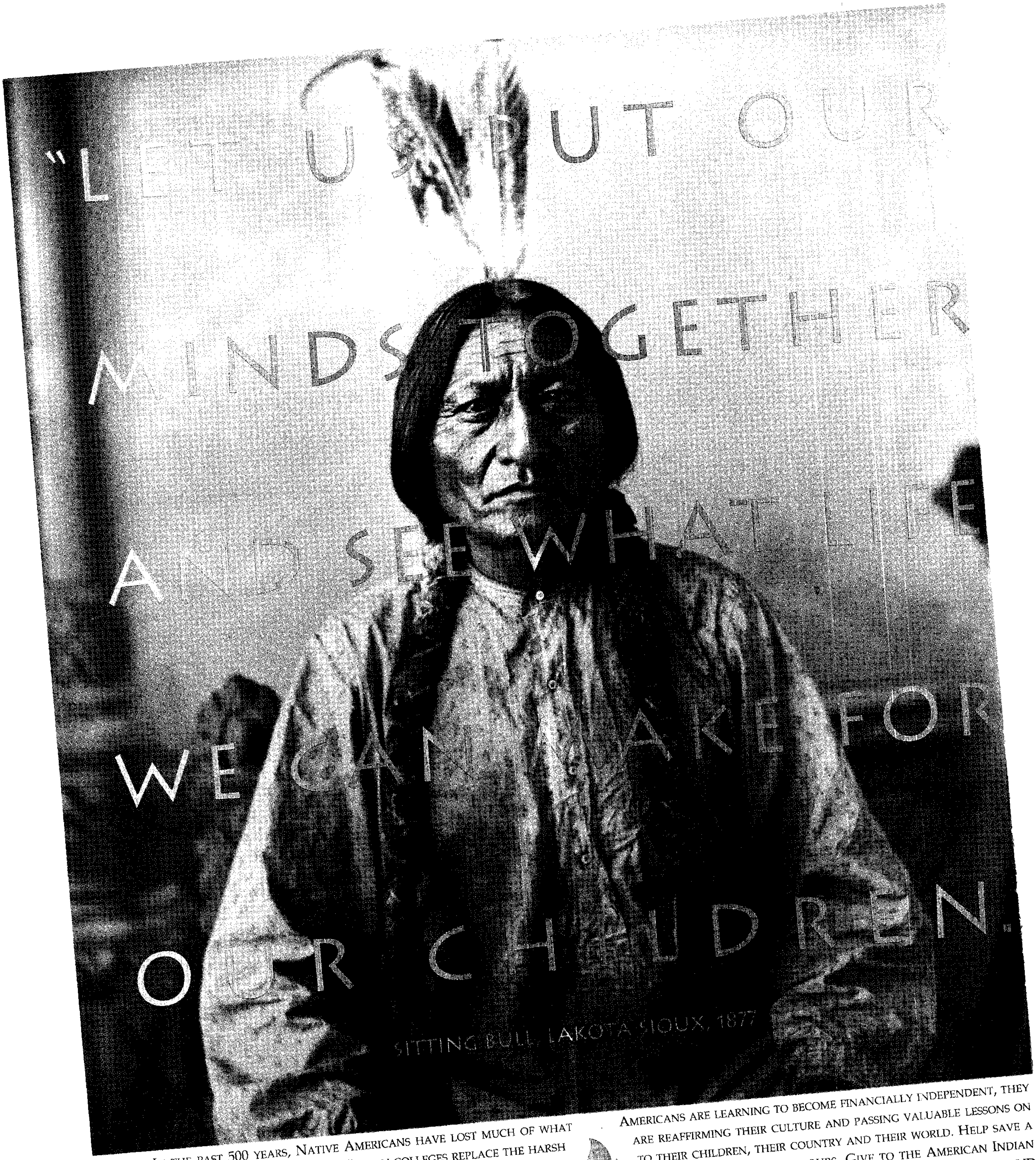
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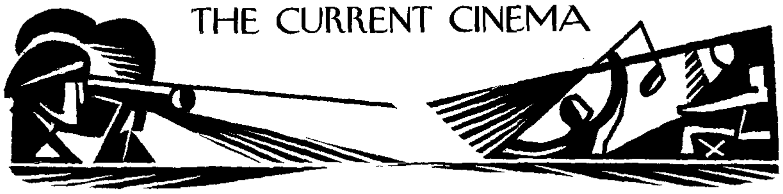


REPUBLICANS WITH GUNS

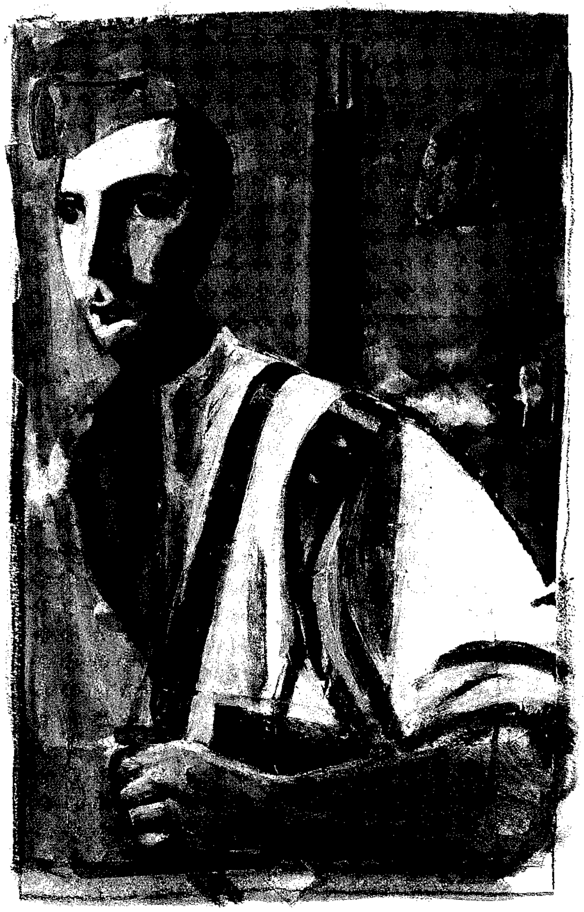
"Land and Freedom," "The Flower of My Secret," and "Fargo."

BY ANTHONY LANE

WHEN the revolution comes, Ken Loach will be the only English-speaking director who won't be strung up from a lamppost. From "Cathy Come Home," his mid-sixties TV film about homelessness, to nineties features like "Hidden Agenda" and "Raining Stones," Loach's work runs with undiminished political fury. "Land and Freedom," his new film, is also his most adventurous project, and it was wonderfully predictable that Loach would choose, for his first shoot outside the British Isles, the clear-cut morality of the Spanish Civil War. Where else could you find such free-floating good guys, defenders not of some dicey imperialist power, like Britain or America, but of universal justice?

Loach's leading man is Ian Hart, who made such a convincingly sneering John Lennon in "Backbeat." Angular of build and ratty of feature, like a flyweight boxer looking for his next fight, Hart plays David, a young firebrand who in 1936 is driven by news of the war to leave Liverpool and travel to Spain. He meets some kindly souls on the train and is immediately recruited to the cause of POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista). After a session of what passes for military drill, David winds up in a revolutionary militia defending a godforsaken trench on a hillside. He gains and then loses a crowd of comrades when the resistance to Franco, displaying the toe-stubbing vehemence that is the unique specialty of the left, wrenches itself apart into opposing factions.

George Orwell, in "Homage to Catalonia," the levelheaded account of his part in the Spanish Civil War, listed, in descending order, what mattered to the Republicans in the trenches: firewood, food, tobacco, candles, and the enemy. I wouldn't have put it past Ken Loach to make a film about firewood, but he has thrown caution to the winds and produced some proper fighting. Taken together, the battle sequences—scrappy, stumbling, pitted with panic—constitute a sharp rebuff of the traditional Hollywood blitz. When the militia sneaks into a village at dawn, a big ex-I.R.A. man named Coogan scampers up a street, hugging the wall, and takes aim. Nothing happens: his rifle isn't loaded, or cocked, or working, or something. Coogan has to look down, fiddle, and *then* shoot, and it makes for a perfect hiccup in the struggle for power. Imagine Schwarzenegger forgetting to check his chamber: the Terminator would be out of a job. We are so acclimatized to the resplendent boom of onscreen armaments that to catch the itchy, uneven crackle of the guns in "Land and Freedom" is to be convinced that we are hearing the real thing. As Orwell recalled, the Mausers available in the Republican trenches were little more than scrap iron ("One rifle in ten was not bad," he wrote), and most of Loach's youthful, fired-up characters use weapons that cough and spit like old men. David sustains his only injury when a rifle that he is demonstrating to a group of callow recruits explodes in his hands. Loach doesn't push the point—he and his editor, Jonathan Morris, have the grace to let the stop-and-go rhythm of the fighting sing for itself—but you are certainly encouraged to follow the echo of such moments, and to see why so much of the revolutionary endeavor backfired.



Ian Hart in Ken Loach's "Land and Freedom."

ANDREA VENTURA

What happens between battles is another matter. There's an affair between David and a POUM stalwart named Blanca (Rosana Pastor), which suggests that Loach, when he dips from confrontation into closer human contact, has his own brand of gaucherie and cliché; and then, halfway through the picture, there's an argument about agricultural collectivization. The talk goes on for about fifteen minutes, but, boy, it seems a whole lot longer. It's a homage to catatonia. People who have seen the film talk about the scene with the same awed expression that you see on the faces of "Reservoir Dogs" addicts when they discuss the ear-slicing sequence—an expression that says, "Did you *watch* that stuff? Tell me you didn't look away." Well, I'm proud to say that I sat through the entire thing; from now on, any time I have a smallholding to collectivize or a few chickens to donate to world peace I'll know what to do.

The problem with this film, as with

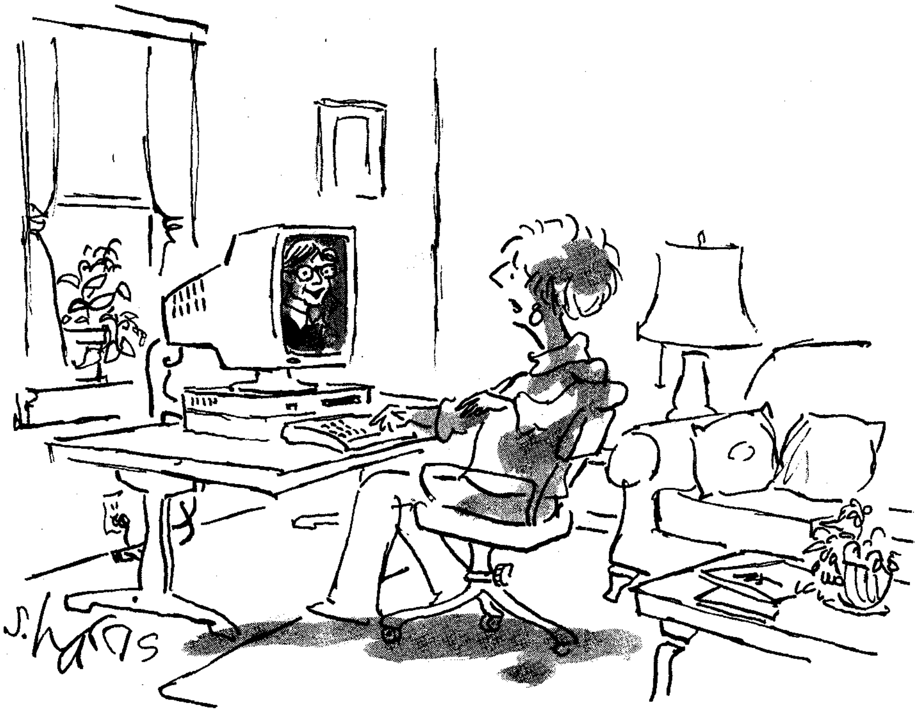
much of Loach's work, is that radical intent is twinned with a prosaic, rather conservative method. I'm glad that someone is soldiering on in the belief that cinema can change our minds, and that a proud, irony-deficient picture can still be made about a bunch of people who wanted to change the world; but, while you're about it, why not tinker with cinema itself—try a few changes there? Loach's style is an earnest stab at non-style; by this standard, anything fancier—Godard's political movies of the sixties, for instance—would be a betrayal of the plain principles of socialist realism. But films like "Land and Freedom" make you wonder afresh whether socialist realism isn't a contradiction in terms. When Coogan dies, and David and his fellows stand at the graveside, and Blanca declares, "The battle is long and our foes are many," I sensed the drama drifting away into as posed and willful an unreality as you could find in a month of movies.

Students of the period could, however, argue in Loach's favor. Reading through Hugh Thomas's "The Spanish Civil War," one realizes that, more than in any other conflict, the combatants really *did* express themselves to an alarming degree in slogans—the simplest verbal currency, perhaps, among a handful of nationalities side by side within a single squad. Loach's casting looks perilously thin, with its awkward spread of European types, but, again, this may come close to the kind of idealistic ragbag that did indeed spill into the hills. What is harder to forgive is the movie's heavy-handed structure: there's a gruesome sequence of flash-forwards in which David's granddaughter finds his letters and mementos from the war. This means, I'm afraid, a regular dose of voice-over, with David spelling out what is happening in Spain: "It's socialism in action." Which is more than you can say for the film itself, with its snooty reluctance to trust the intelligence of a mass audience. How can Loach master his medium so beautifully in the battle scenes and then deny it the chance to tell a fluent story elsewhere? You can't help thinking back to "Grand Illusion," a grave essay on universal brotherhood which strolls along as if it were light comedy. If "Land and Freedom" is inspired, it also proves that inspiration is only half the deal. Loach's aim is true, but his barrel is clogged up.

AND what was the sacrifice for? Where did it all lead? It's a sobering thought, but the Davids of this world may have suffered and died so that Pedro Almodóvar's characters could live in a state of hysteria.

The most serious threat to Almodóvar's art has always been the lack of shame with which, from the start, he bared his hairy obsessions. His love of the startling, best viewed in the 1988 "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," slowly unfurled into a regular pattern, like a bolt of pink fabric. He went on believing that we were shockable well after he had ceased to shock us (John Waters has the same problem), and most viewers of the last Almodóvar picture, "Kika," were generally convinced that they were staring at a dead end. All the more reason, then, to welcome his new offering, "The Flower of My Secret," which demonstrates that (unlike Waters) Almodóvar just may have spotted a way out of his predicament. He has—the cheek of it!—grown up. The plot, by Almodóvar's standards, runs scandalously straight. Paco (Imanol Arias) is married to Leo (Marisa Paredes); he is a soldier, based in Brussels, and she is, to all appearances, the bored, unhappy housewife left behind in Madrid. The precise calibre of her misery can be gauged from a glance at her bedside reading, which starts with a copy of Djuna Barnes's "Nightwood" and gets even gloomier, if that is possible.

Leo has ambitions to be a serious novelist herself, but her income derives from perfumed romances that she composes under the guilty pseudonym of Amanda Gris. This being an Almodóvar film—people tend to ignore how skilled he is at gentle suspense—we don't learn of Leo's secret for some time. Meanwhile, in search of an escape route, she has entered into a semi-literary flirtation with the unequivocally named Angel (Juan Echanove), a rotund journalist from *El País*. At one point, he finds her in the hub of an angry, pullulating crowd, and hugs her to his vatlike body as the camera draws back and rises away. It's a visual quotation from the marvellous climax to Rossellini's "Voyage to Italy," where George Sanders clasps Ingrid Bergman in similar circumstances; but Almodóvar places what should be a climactic gesture in the middle of his film. Whether Angel and Leo are embracing for safety or for love is open to debate, and whether he will earn her heart is an issue not settled until the final shot, but, for the first time, Almodóvar seems indifferent to resolutions: he leaves feelings to hang and turn in the air, and they look pretty good up



"Hi, this is Bill Gates. Time to buy some new software."

there. When Leo gets an offer of free sex from her housekeeper's hunky son, she *turns it down.* Curiouser and curiouser.

What's so amiable about "The Flower of My Secret" is that it takes the trouble to be both an Amanda Gris film, so to speak, and a more highbrow enterprise. Leo herself sways back and forth between knit-hat dowdiness and a horny cosmopolitan glamour; the fractures in her spirit run deep, but she is surrounded by one of those panoplies of clucking women which traditionally brighten every Almodóvar film. Her quailing mother is played by Chus Lampreave, who was such good value in "What Have I Done to Deserve This?" And then, as Leo's sister, there is the great Rossy De Palma, who resembles a figure in the "Demoiselles d'Avignon": you sit there holding your breath, praying for her to turn in profile. "The Flower of My Secret" goes on too long, and I am growing immune to some of Almodóvar's emotional shorthand—a folk song sobbed out on the television, a floor-cracking demonstration of flamenco. But he gets formidable work from Marisa Paredes, and, for a reputed wild boy, he has a surprisingly sweet touch when it comes to family life. In the later stages of the film, Angel drives Leo and her mother out to the tranquillity of their home village. The women who sit there in the sunlight, making lace and small talk, seem as far from the verge of a nervous breakdown as anyone could hope to be.

"FARGO," the new picture by the Coen brothers, starts by cautioning us that we are about to witness a true story, and that only the names of the participants have been changed, "out of respect for the dead." Respect? What the hell is going on here? Excuse me, but I thought that this was supposed to be a Coen-brothers movie.

Things get weirder, of course. They end up with a body being fed into a wood chipper, and the wood chipper making an almighty fuss. But, even so, there's no doubt that the new movie *is* kind of respectful. Much of it kicks and stamps along with a pensive, wrapped-up air that feels seasons away from the vain, flamboyant excesses of earlier Coen projects. Most of the action takes place in Minnesota, which appears to be auditioning for a permanent role as God's icebox; "Fargo," in its compound of low temperatures and casual outrages, is the nearest that America has yet come to an Aki Kaurismäki film. The snowscapes here are so arctically pure that I was surprised to find the plot revolving around cops and criminals. I would have thought that any murder committed in Minnesota could be excused on the ground that the assailant was merely searching for a novel way to keep warm.

The story begins with the pathetic Jerry (William H. Macy) arranging to have his wife kidnapped by a couple of bozos (Peter Stormare and the inevitable Steve Buscemi). The scheme hits a bump when an investigating policeman is killed and another, Marge Gunderson (Frances McDormand), is put on the case. McDormand, who didn't register strongly when she starred in "Blood Simple," takes full command of the new movie. As written, her character—seven months pregnant, polite to a fault, smart yet slow—is only a breath away from caricature, yet McDormand unearths a surprising decency there, and in the process she pretty well rescues the film. The Coen brothers are lured so automatically toward the offbeat that they invariably require the services of a rooted performer (here it's McDormand, and in "Barton Fink" it was John Goodman) to remind us that sticking to the beat is O.K.

If I hailed from Minnesota, I wouldn't quite know whether to be flattered or outraged by "Fargo." It is littered with nice, plodding Scandinavian citizens, all of whom deliver passionless conversation, as if their batteries were running low. Marge, who comes from the town of Brainerd, drawls out lines such as "Jeez, that's a good lead" and "I'm not sure that I agree with you one hundred per cent on your police work there." It hadn't previously occurred to me that the ranks of American law enforcement could be swelled by importing dramatis personae from the work of Samuel Beckett, but the Coen brothers, when they're on form, can be horribly persuasive. Brainerds everywhere will have a ball. ♦

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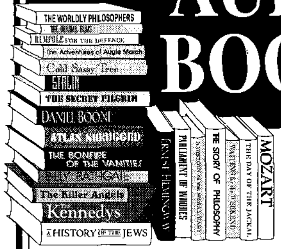

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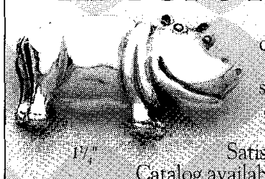

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

A MEMO FROM DAD

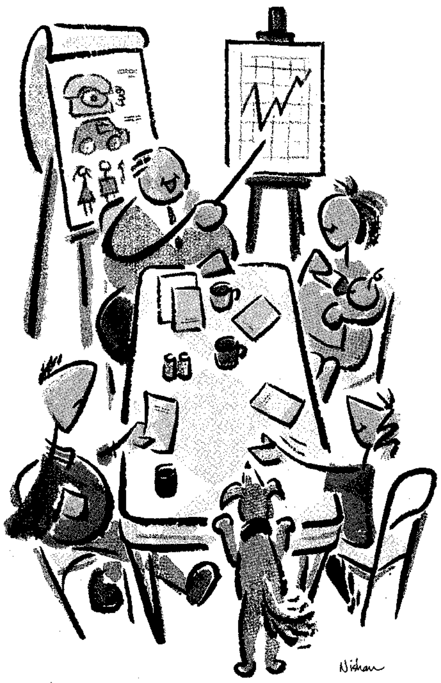
BY ROBERT SULLIVAN

As your father, I am happy to report that our family had a marvelously successful first quarter this year. Earnings are up, costs are down (despite the new fuel pump on the minivan), and, as you all know by now, we've added a new member, Katherine Anne. At nine pounds two ounces, she is, I believe, another example of the kind of quality work that we've come to expect from your mother—the kind that has made us stand out from other families on the block.

And yet I can't help thinking that we've still got a lot of work left to do, which is why I am circulating this memo today. We can't blame only ourselves; like families everywhere, we are facing hard times, with new technologies, leaner competition, and inflationary orthodontic costs. But when I look around the kitchen table I see inefficiencies and redundancies, out-of-control allowances—I see a family run like a liberal welfare scam. We need to make some tough choices.

Let's begin with Jimmy. I've been reviewing your contribution to the family, and I'm afraid we're going to have to let you go. Your frequent late-night weekend outings have become a drain on me personally, and I think even your mother will admit that at seventeen you're not as cute as you used to be. You will all be happy to know that I am currently in negotiations with Frank Lindgren, our next-door neighbor, hoping to arrange a contractual agreement with his son, Frank, Jr. With a part-time son, our food-and-milk overhead will be significantly reduced. Also, I see some potential synergy in the area of garbage take-out. (A brief personal note: Jimmy, I trust that you will let me know if I can be of assistance should you seek relationships with any other families in the neighborhood. I hear the Wenglers are looking for a freelance cousin, and I'd be happy to recommend you.)

In the matter of Jennifer: I am pleased to report that I have finished reviewing the analysis of last month's phone bill as conducted by Cane & Co., an independent consulting firm, and that I will be redesigning your position, as per the report's recommendation. So, while you will still be referred to as "daughter" at family gatherings and in all interfamily communications, your official title will be "communications specialist," effective immediately. Your aggressive use of late-night calling discounts is to be commended, Princess, and you'll be hearing from me soon regarding the acquisition of your new pager.



There are numerous additional positions within our family that might be merged or downsized with an eye to increased returns. I feel we will operate more efficiently, for instance, with an over-all grandparent-and-great-grandparent-surplus reduction—but attrition may help us out in this area. Likewise, Uncles Fred, Derrick, Rodney, and Harry will be removed from all barbecue-invitation lists and phone logs, and I am especially happy to announce that as of midnight tonight we will permanently discontinue the position of mother-in-law. Denise will retain her post as mother while assuming all the responsibilities that, through this refocussing of the skill mix, have not been reassigned. Here I am thinking primarily of walking Iaccoca, our German shepherd, and the Sunday-afternoon washing of the cars, both of which were formerly Jimmy's department.

As for myself, I will be attending a family-management seminar next week in the company of Frank Lindgren and Don Wengler. The program is entitled "Officer, I've Never Seen These Children Before: How to Survive a Hostile Family Takeover with Quick and Drastic Reductions in Labor Costs," and while I'm there I hope to meet with other fathers who are in the midst of downsizing. This year, it's in Palm Springs, which I think will be the perfect place for us fathers to unwind with one-on-one organizational-strategy sessions and a little golf. If anyone's concerned about the cost of the trip, don't worry: I've been reviewing my own performance, and I have decided to give myself a raise. ♦

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